

W B B 3

Sam: 2. Cap: 12. V. 6.

Math: Cap: 26. V. 74.

THE
Doctrin of the
SAINTS Infirmities.
Deliver'd in Sundry
SERMONS.

By Iohn Preston,
Dr. in D. M. of Emmanuells
Colledge, in Cambridge.
AND
late Preacher of Lincolnes
Inne.

London.
Printed for Henry Taunton, and
are to be sold at his shop in St.
Dunstons Church-yard, Fleetstreet.

Sam: 2. Cap: 11. V. 4.

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Will: Marshall.



Sculp: sit. 1677.

12. 7. 37⁸

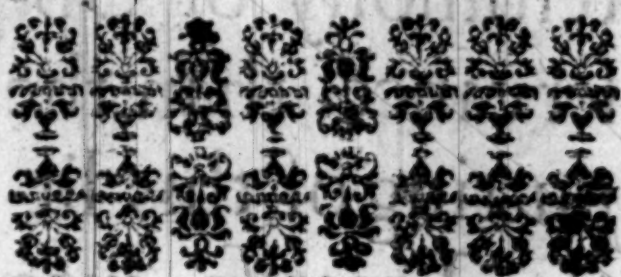
THE
DOCTRINE
OF
THE SAINTS
Infirmities.

Delivered in severall Ser-
mons by JOHN PRESTON
Doctor in Divinity, Mr. of
Emanuel Colledge in
Cambridge.


And late preacher of Lincolnes Inne.

LONDON,
Printed by *Iohn Okes* for *Sarah*
Taunton, and are to be sold at
her shop in *St. Dunstons*
Church-yard in *Fleet-*
street. 1638.

9



To the Learned
and religious Gen-
tleman HENRY
LAURENCE
Esquire.

Ortby Sir, al-
though your
owne *native worth*
might justly draw
from us a greater
A 3 testi-

The Epistle

testimony of Observance, than the putting of this little Treatise into your Hand ; yet have we bin rather hereunto induced, by the consideration of such *adornments of wisdom, learning, & piety in you*, as had express relation to the Author, and may seeme to

Dedicatory.

to be the fruit & issues of his labours in your younger years. It is true indeed that the *goodnes* of the *soile adds* much unto the greatnesse of the Crop ; but it is as true, that the industry and *Wisdome* of the husbandman *adds* also much unto the

A 4 good-

The Epistle

goodnesse of the
Soile ; yet neither
of these without a
gracious influence
from heaven, bring
forth a harvest.

It hath pleased
God, there should
be Extant divers
Monuments where-
by the *Authours*
Eminent *abilities*
do yet survive in
the hearts and E-
steeme

Dedicatory.

esteem of Men:
yet none expresse
him more unto the
life, then the piety
& Vertue of those
that grew up un-
der him, *He lives* 1 Thes. 3. 8.
if they stand fast in
the Lord. Among
whom, as you had
a greater intimacy
of all the nearest,
not of a pupil, but
of a *bosom-friend,* &

The Epistle

*continuall Compani-
on ; and therein a
longer Time : so
have You answered it, as then in
Love and Respect
to him, so since in a
Proportionable and
happy improve-
ment of what You
did Receive. And
therefore as we con-
ceived, it would
bee, a Derogation
in-*

Dedictory.

*injurious unto Your
candid and ingeni-
ous Disposition, to
thinke You unwill-
ing to bee, put in
minde of Him, by
whose RELIGIOUS
care You were so
often put in minde
of God, & of your
Selfe : So also an
unworthy and un-
grateful disrespect,
to have omitted
the in-*

The Epistle

inscription of *your*
Name ; especially
by us , who long
have bin and are

Your loving
and obliged
Friends.

Tho: Goodwin.
Tho: Ball.

Imprimatur Tho. Wykes.
March the 26. 1368.



SERMONS

BY

JOHN PRESTON

Dr. of D.

2.Chron.30.18,19,20.

18. **T** Or a multitude of
the people, even
many of Ephra-
im, and Manasseh, Issa-
char, and Zebulon, had
not cleansed themselves;
yet did they eat the Passe-
over otherwise than it
was written, but Hezeki-
ah prayed for them saying,
the good Lord pardon e-
very one.

'B

19. That

19. *That prepareth his heart to seeke God: The Lord God of his Fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.*
20. *And the Lord bearkned to Hezekiah, and healed the people.*



THE occasion of these words was the illegality of some resorters to the Passeover at this Time, for this solemne Duty having beene long neglected, by occasion of the negligence of former Governours : *Ezekiah* sends his Messengers not onely into

into *Juda*, but also into *Israel*, to assemble them, if it were possible, unto this great Solemnity; which was effected with various successe, for in some places they were entertain'd with scoffs; in others, with great readinesse, to submit themselves unto this Sacred Ordinance, but the warning being short, and journey long, there were many wanted legall cleansing; *Hezekiah* seeing the promptnesse of the people, and that in the substance of the Duty they had not fayled, puts up this *Prayer* to Almighty God, in their behalfe.

In which *Prayer* we have these three things to be

considered , and understood.

1. The substance of it, which was, that GOD would pardon, or be mercifull.

2. The persons for whom he made it , and they are described two wayes.

1 From the preparation of their soules and inward man, they prepared their whole hearts.

2. From the imperfections of their outward and legall preparations, they were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.

3. The successe and issue that it had, which was the healing of the people; that is, God blessed that ordinance

nance of his for the removal of that outward guilt, contracted by those ceremonial neglects, or otherwise, and for the strengthening of their soules in grace and holinesse, and for the curing of their outward estate, which lay open at this time to many pressures and calamities on every side. The points of Doctrine might be many that would hence arise, but we doe purpose onely to handle two.

1. That in all the parts of publicke worship and performances, the Lord especially requires, and expects the Heart bee right; he would have nothing wanting, but of all

Doff. 1.

the rest hee would not have the heart imperfect, or defective, the good Lord, (sayes this good King) be mercifull to every one that prepareth his whole heart, to seeke the Lord God of his Fathers, though he be not clensed, that is, though hee be in other things imperfect and defective : So *Solomon*, this good Kings predecessor, *Prov. 4. 23. Keepe thy heart with all diligence; thy foote is not to be neglected, Eccle. 5. 1. but to be kept, but not with so much care and circumspection as the heart, that part must not be wanting, what ever other parts were; and therefore if a-*
ny

ny were in this defective,
Hezekiah prayes not for
them.

Reas. I.

I. Because the heart is
that which God himfelfe
doth most delight in, no
duty can be well perfor-
med where God himfelfe
doth not vouchsafe his
presence and assistance.
*Heb. 13. 15. By him there-
fore let us offer the sacrifice
of praise to God continually,
that is, by his assistance and
gracious presence : but
where there is not a heart
to receive and entertaine
God in, he never will, nor
doth afford his presence.
Esay 66. 1, 2. Heaven is my
Throne, and the Earth my
foot-stoole, &c. But to this
man will I looke, even to*
B 4 him

him that is poore, and of a contrite heart, according to that of the Psal. 51.17. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and contrite heart, &c.*

Though to the eye of men it may seeme a despicable and meane abode, for such a glorious and excellling Majesty, yet sure it is not so by him accounted : when a great man is to be received into our houses, we are carefull that there be no breaches in them ; but when the great and glorious God is to be received into our hearts, he will not stumble at the wounds and breaches.

Reason 2.

The heart is that onely part,

part, whereby God estimates, and makes a judgement of the whole, hee takes measure of a man by his heart, if that be sound and upright, he never curiously examines other parts; wee commonly are taken with the face and countenance, beause wee are not able to looke deeper; but God regards not that, as being able to descend into the secret closet of the heart. *1. Sam. 16. 6, 7.* And he looked on *Eliab*, and said, *Surely the Lords annointed is before him.* But the Lord said unto *Samuel*, *Looke not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the*

*Lord seeth not as man seeth;
For man looketh on the out-
ward appearance; but the
Lord seeth the heart: And
accordingly yee have the
doome of almost all the
Kings of Judah, according
to the goodnesse or bad-
nesse of their hearts: 2.
Chron. 25. 2. Hee did that
which was right in the sight
of God, but not with a per-
fect heart: And the like
is also testified of many
other of them.*

Reas. 3.

3. The heart is the har-
dest piece to manage and
manure; and therefore he
that keepes that well in
tune, is not likely to be
wanting in the other: if in
a Violl, I finde the Treble
string in tune; I make no
que-

question of the Base that goes not out so easily : *Symon Magnus* had composed the other parts, *Acts* 8. 13. *He did beleewe, and was Baptized* : but this string was out of Tune, the Apostle findes this jarring, *ver. 21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this busines, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God, in his owne sight* no question but hee thought it so, but it was not so in Gods sight : And indeed the heart is so deceitfull, that it will deceive the the very owner and possessor of it : like to your Juglers, that will doe a thing before your face, and yet you shall not see them do it, *2. King. Why weepeth my*

*my Lord? (saith Hazael)
 Why (sayes the Prophet) for
 the great evil, that I know
 thou wilt doe unto the chil-
 dren of Israel; their strong
 holds thou wilt set on fire,
 &c. And Hazael said, Is thy
 servant a dogge, that hee
 should do this great thing?
 There were Characters of
 cruelty ingraven on his
 heart, which himselfe had
 never read, nor beene ac-
 quainted yet withall, Who
 knoweth (saith the Apostle)
 1. Cor. 2. 11. the things of a
 man, but the spirit of man
 that is within him? One
 would think a man should
 read his owne hand, yet
 some do write so bad, that
 they cannot read it when
 they have done; and so did*

Hazael

Hazael, he had hatcht such cursed thoughts within him, that he could not see unto the utmost *terminus* and end of them ; if a man hath a spot upon his face, he is warned of it by every body else, because its knowne he cannot see it; but he may have a thousand spots upon his heart, and neither he, nor no man in the World beside be able to discover it : he therefore that hath wel prepared this part, will hardly be defective in the rest.

4. The heart is the spring and first wheele of all that curious Clocke-worke of the soule; so that if that be but ordered and kept aright,

Reason 4.

aright, it will direct and order all the rest, and this is the reason that the Holy Ghost is pleased for to give, *Prov. 4. 23. Out of it are the issues of life* : If a man had a Wel or Fountaine in his Garden; out of which came all the liquors that he used, he had neede be very diligent to keepe that cleane; if that were poisoned, it would be hard for himsele long to escape. Now the heart is such a fountaine, *Rom. 10. 10. With the heart man beleeueth to righteousness, And from within, even out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, &c. Mar. 7. 21. the Gentiles were accounted common & prophane before Christs time,*

time, but after their hearts were purified, even Peter himselfe, the *Apostle* of the *Circumcision*, durst venture on them, *Act. 15.9.* For God puts no difference betweene them and the Jewes, after that by faith he had purified their hearts: give me never so bad a man, make but his heart right, and I dare venture to close with him: if ye take out the Serpents sting, hee may be played with, or otherwise imploied, without either danger, or other inconvenience.

Let use every one be hence encouraged to examine well, and looke unto our hearts; for if they be any way disordered and out of tune, our actions and per-
for-

Use.

formances will not be relished. Remember what the Apostle saith, *Heb. 3. 12.* Take heede brethren lest there bee in any of you an evil heart of unbeliefe to depart from the living God; an unbeleeving and evill heart will evermore bee drawing backe from God, will not come at him by its good will, *Matth. 15. 8, 9.* They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are removed far from me. And what then became of all their Worship? why surely it came to nothing, *In vaine they worship mee:* A heartlesse worship is a worship that God regards not; but if the heart be framed and prepared as it should

should be, God looks not at the many imperfections that may be found in circumstantial matters.

But it will bee here demanded how one may know when his heart is truly qualified and fitted for a duty?

Question.

When hee is perswaded of a speciall and peculiar eye of God upon him in the duty, that God in a speciall manner doth behold him, and observe him how he doth it ; he must beleeeve that God is at his Elbow , *Heb. 11. 6. Hee that commeth to God, must beleeeve that God is ;* that is, must have his heart delivered from that blindness, wherein by nature al mens
mens

Ans^r. I.

hearts remaine. What was the reason that the Gentiles, even in their solemne worship of their Gods, were so abominable oftentimes? because their Hearts were darke and blinde in spirituall and celestiall matters, *Rom. 1. 21, 22, 23. Their foolish hearts were darkned, and then they changed the truth of God into a lye, and worshipped the Creature in stead of the Creator, &c.* But when the heart is seriously convinced that God is present, records and registers all our deportments whatsoever: it makes us circumspect and carefull, even those that are otherwise regardlesse of their duties; yet

yet when their Masters eie is on them, will consider what they doe: and therefore the Apostle requires of **Christian** Servants more, *Ephes. 6. 6.* Because the Heathen would doe thus much, the very Assē, when shee saw the Angell in the passage, behavers herself accordingly, *Numb. 22, 23.* If a man would therefore know, whether his heart be fitted and prepared for any duty, let him seriously examine, whether hee is thus perswaded of the speciall eye of God upon him in it.

2. The heart is then prepared for a duty and service unto God, when it is sequestred and taken off from

from other things : when the drosse and staine of naturall selfe-love, and earthly mindednesse is gotten out: as we see, men bring not filthy Vessels, unwashed, and uncleansed to their Masters Table. Yee may see, perhaps, an impure and filthy vessell in the Kitchin, but upon the Table it is not tollerable: These men that came unto the Passeover, although not washed according to the purification of the Sanctuary ; yet were, no question, purged inwardly: they had, no doubt, a substantiall, though not a Ceremoniall cleansing, according to that of the Apostle, *2.Tim.2.21. If a man*

man doe therefore purge himselfe from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Masters use, and prepared unto every good worke.

There's none of us would have our meate come up upon a dirty dish, and much lesse God. When *David* asked for some holy Shew bread from the Priests, he tels him withall, that the vessels of the young men, that were to carry it, were holy, *1 Sam. 21.5.* So must our hearts be, when we adventure to draw neare to God; And though we cannot here attaine a perfect purity, but that corruption will stil be mingled with our best performance.

formances, yet that must be removed, and laid aside, that kept us backe from turning to the Lord: the rubbish of necessity must be removed, that stops the building from going on, *1 Pet. 1. 22, 23. Seeing yee have purified your soules to the obedience of the Truth; unto unfeigned love of the brethren, &c. Being borne againe, &c.* That is, seeing that *original impurity*, that blocked up the soule from turning unto God, is done away, the heapes of muck and rubbish, that stood where now the building is erected; for that's done alwayes at the first conversion of the soule to God, and never fully doth returne. 3. When

3. When it is softned, and fitted to receive impressions : when the *Centurion* by much dejection and prostration of his soule to God in secret, had his heart so mollified, that any thing would make a character or Print : Hee tells *Peter*, *He was ready to heare whatsoever God should bee pleased for to speake*, *Act. 10.*

33. It's not enough that the mettall be refined, and purged from the drosse, that before did cleave unto it : unlesse it likewise be so softned, as that it will accommodate it selfe unto the mold, or stampe it shal be cast into : and therefore it's powred into that while it is soft and liquid. So the
Apostle

Apostle, *Rom. 6. 17.* argues, they now were truly freed from the dominion and power of their former unregenerate estate, because their hearts did yeeld unto the stampe that was imprinted on them,
 'Εἰς τὴν παρομοιωσιν τοῦ θανάτου διὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας.

As the Mettall then is judged to bee sufficiently continued in the Furnace, when it willingly receives the forme and figure of that which it is cast and powred into. Thus *Paul* was melted by that Sunne of righteousness, that shone into his soule, when hee was going upon other errands, *Acts 9. 6.* And he trembling and astonishd, saying, Lord, what wilt

wilt thou have mee for to
doe? as if he should have
said, This fire of thy love
hath now so thawed and
melted my obdurate, and
kicking soule, that it is pre-
pared for any mould, to
receive what print soever
thou shalt bee pleased for
to stampe upon it: put me
into whatsoever shape
thou wilt, I am now ready
for any mold; to be a prea-
cher, that have been a per-
secutor; to suffer my selfe,
that have beene the cause
of so much suffering to o-
thers formerly; and there-
fore no marvail'e, if the
Lord professeth he would
looke to such alone, *Isai.*
66. ver. 2. because onely
such are fitted to bee
C wrought

wrought upon ; whereas unbroken and unmollified spirits submit to nothing, but the Word is as water spilt upon the Rocke, that makes no manner of impression.

4. The heart is then prepared for a duty, when it makes the duty but a bridge to lead him unto God, when it rests not in the deed, but passeth by it, and through it to God : Yee have many very frequent in the outward Acts of duty, will heare, and pray, and fast, and preach perhaps ; yet raise their soules no higher than the outward act alone. *Hos. 7. 14. And they have not cryed unto mee with their hearts*

*hearts, when they howled up-
on their beds :* Therefore
not with their hearts, be-
cause not unto me, or at
least, with hearts well-qua-
lified, and fitted for that
holy duty : There were
some (it may bee) a-
mong these people that
came unto the Passeover
to please the King, because
the King was pleased for
to have it so, and so they
should; but if they rested
there, and went no further,
their service would not
be accepted, neither were
they included in *Hezeki-
ahs* Prayer; for hee onely
prayed for them that
sought the Lord God of
their Fathers ; not that
sought the face of the Ru-
ler,

ler, or the favour of this
godly King, or any other
by and carnall end. So
Esa. 55. 6. Seeke the Lord
while he may be found. The
duty is ordained to draw
and to allure the soule to
God, no more but an op-
portunity that God and
men may trade, and have
commerce with one ano-
ther: As *Solomon* did there-
fore build the glorious
Temple to the Lord, that
he might dwell with men:
2. Chron. 7. 12. But now
if any rested in that Tem-
ple, and went no higher,
he had no interest in any
promise that was made
unto it; for the condition
of the promise was, that
they should seeke his
face.

face. ver. 14. *If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seeke my face, and turne from their wicked way : Then will I heare from heaven, and wil forgive their sin, & wil heale their Land: if they shall humble themselves, and pray, and seeke my face ; but if they prayed never so much, and in their prayers had onely respect and aime unto themselves, hee would not heare them ; It is a strange expression of the Prophet, Amos 5. 25, 26. Have yee offered unto me Sacrifice, and offerings in the wilderness, by the space of forty yeares, O yee house of Israel? Why*

what did they with the Tabernacle, and all their furniture? but accommodate their publicke service in the wilderness, no saies God, Yee did it to your selves; your ends and aymes were carnall, sensuall, and earthly in it, and you had no profit by it, as neither have many now a dayes; for want of disposing and preparing of their hearts for God aright. And so wee have done with the first point observed from the Text.

Wee are now to come unto the latter part, and reason of this holy mans Request, which was their not being cleansed according to the purification of the

the Sanctuary, which was a legal barre and let to stop them from the Pasſeover, how upright and ſincere ſoever they were: Wherefore he labours by earneſt prayer to remove this barre and great impediment, and the Lord expreſſeth here his willingnes to be intreated; for the Lord heard his prayer, and healed the people, whence this will follow.

Where there is uprightnes and ſincerity of heart, infirmities doe not exclude from mercy; this is apparant in the Text, for hee prayes for mercy, and ha th it granted, although they were not qualified as God required, and may

Doctr. 2.

be further proved.

Reas. 1.

From the wisdom of God, who knowes what we can doe, and will expect no more ; as a wise Parent will not looke for so much from a weake childe, as from a strong; nor from a sicke servant, as from a healthfull ; it is his wisdom to consider what wee are, and accordingly to deale with us; and therefore we may be sure that hee will not cast us off for our infirmities, but as a father beares with his sonne that feares him, though hee spies many faults in him : *Like as a father pitttieth his children, so the Lord pitttieth them that feare him.* For hee know-

knoweth our frame, he remembreth that wee are but dust. *Psalm. 103. 13, 14.* So the Lord hath compassion on them that feare him: Why? because he knowes whereof we are made, he remembreth that we are but dust. So we see, that when the *Israelites* had so provoked God, that he could scarce hold his hand off them; yet he staied his hand, even then when he was ready to strike. And many times saith the Text, *Psalm. 78. 38, 39.* But he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stirre up his wrath; For he remembered that they

were but flesh, and that they were even a winde that passeth away, and commeth not againe. He called backe his anger, because hee remembered they were but flesh. And herein God shewes his wisdom, and wee ours : A wise man lookes for no more of his servant than he is able to doe : but on the contrary, a foolish man expects as much from a weaker, as from a stronger, and falls presently upon him if hee does not as much : So wee our selves shew our wisdom in other things, as for example.

If there were a little Gold, and much drosse mingled together ; A wise man

man will not for the drosse sake cast away the Gold, but purifie and try it : So if we have corne, although there be some cockle in it, yet a wise husband-man will not reject it, but winnow it, and purge it.

So God, being a wise God, doth not cast us off presently for our infirmities, if there be any truth and sincerity in us : And as God is wise, so compassionate, and beares with our infirmities.

The *Taske-masters* wanted compassion, and therefore expected more from the *Israelites* than they were able to do : So whilst wee were under the Law, there was a burthen laid upon

upon us, which neither we nor our Fathers could beare ; but now if we be once under grace, the Lord doth not lay such loads upon us : But if there be truth in the heart, he accepts of our endeavours, although accompanied with many weaknesses.

Reas. 2.

A second reason is taken from the covenant, for so long as a man is in the covenant, his infirmities cannot cut him off from Gods mercy. Now it is certaine, we may have many infirmities, and the covenant remaine unbroken: for every sin doth not breake the covenant, but those that untye the
mar-

marriage knot: As in marriage every offence doth not disanull the marriage, but onely the breach of the marriage vow: to wit, Adultery : So onely here those sinnes that breake the Covenant, which untye the marriage knot, (as it were) and that is;

First, when we take any now Master, and this wee doe when we let any sinne reigne in our hearts ; if we set up any sinne , that commands and rules us ; then the covenant is broken, for thou hast chosen a new Master.

Secondly, if we take another husband; and this we doe

I

2

Preston,

doe, when wee make a league with sinne ; if wee be in league with anything in the world, that doth draw our hearts from God, we breake our covenant in choosing another Husband. But other failings doe not break the covenant, and whiles it remaines in force, we have interest in Gods mercies, for he cannot forget his covenant ; which if hee should, yet Christ is the Mediator, and would put him in mind of it.

Reason 3.

A third reason is drawn from the common condition of all the Saints: Take all the Saints that ever lived, and every one of them have had infirmities.

Now

Now if God should bee too
extreame to marke our ini-
quities, (Psal. 130. 3, 4.)
who should stand? If God
should cast off all that have
infirmities, then none
should be saved, and then
wherefore hath Christ dy-
ed? But saith the Psalmist:
*Mercy is with thee, therefore
thou art to be feared:* That
is, if God were so severe a
Master, that he would en-
dure no failing, then hee
should have no servants:
But it is his mercy that
makes him to bee feared.
And thus we see that infir-
mities doe not cut us off
from Gods mercy, if we be
found at the heart; but
withal we must remember
these two Cautions.

First,

Cation I.

First, though infirmities do not utterly exclude us from the mercies of God; yet they may bring upon us many and sore afflictions, and hinder us of many blessings: & here we must remeber these distinctiō.

I

First, there is a voluntary infirmity, which proceeds from our own wils, and by how much the more will is an infirmity, by so much the more God is provoked to anger, and to punish and afflict us.

But there is another infirmity which ariseth from some impediment which a man would faine remove, but he cannot. As for example: A man would faine remembreth all he heareth,

reth, but he cannot, because his memory is fraile, and he cannot help it; he would convert many to God, but he cannot, because he hath weak parts. He would faine have such a lust removed, but God doth not please to set his spirit at liberty, though he doe his utmost endeavour, for that must still be remembred; for if a man saies hee would pray fervently morning & evening, & yet sits still, & doth not set upon the duty and strive to doe it; this is the act of the sluggard; So also in other things.

2

Secondly, there is an infirmity that ariseth from want of growth, for there are some Babes in Christ,
some

some buds that are but tender, even as a tree hath some buds and sprouts as well as branches: And these suck sappe from the tree, as well as the branches. Now, God beares much with those that are such, and will not presently punish them for their failings; he will not in this case quench the smoaking Flaxe, nor breake the bruised Reede: he will not put new wine into old vessels: he knowes there is much of the old man still in them, and therefore wil not enioyne them to such great duties as they are not able to performe; he will not put too much on them at the first: Hee
com-

cōmands us not to reject,
or despise those that are
weake, *Rom. 14. 13.* Let us
not therefore judge one ano-
ther any more, but judg this
rather, that no man put a
stumbling block, or any oc-
casion to fal in his brothers
way. And sure then, him-
selfe will practice that rule
that he prescribes to us.

But now there are other
infirmities that arise from
sicknesse, in those that
have beene strong, and
through some distempers
are become sicke, and are
fallen from their first love,
as in the 2 of the *Rev. 2. 4,*
5. Nevertheless I have
somewhat against thee, be-
cause thou hast left thy first
love : remember therefore
from

from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe thy first workes, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his place, except thou repent; Or that arise from some desertion, themselves being then causes of it, by reason of presumption, as in Peter and Hezekiah: Now in this case God doth not beare with a man but will come against him quickly, and will not stay long, unlesse they repent, and doe their first workes.

3.

We must remember, that to some, God hath appointed a lesser stature in grace, & to others greater: there are Christians of all sizes, as it were. Now those that
are

are of the least size, they are the weakest, and these are generally weake: that is, they are weake in their understandings, weake in affections, weake in all; and with these God beares much: As wee may see in the Church of Thyatira, Rev. 2. 24, 25. But unto you I say, & to the rest of Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, & which have not known the depths of Satan as they speake: I will put upon you none other burthen; but that which you have already, hold fast til I come. There were some that were expert, and others that were weaker: Now for those saith God, that have not this Learning,

ning, neither have knowne the deepnesse of Sathan, I do not require so much of you, but onely, that you hold fast that which yee have.

4.

Fourthly, but now there is another infirmity, which doth not runne in generall over the whole man, but is some particular infirmity, which is in a man that is strong, and hath attained a greater measure of grace : As a body may be strong, and have some particular weaknesse; and a wall may be strong, yet have some weake parts: so a Christian may have strong lusts : some particular infirmities; as indulgencies to his Children,
or

or pride, or any other; so then this rule is true, That strong infirmities bring strong afflictions: as wee see it did in *Ely*, for his indulgency, and so in *David*, he had strong and long afflictions for his strong lusts.

Fifthly, we are to remember, that there is an infirmity in a man that hee is sensible of, and strives against it with al his might, and yet cannot get victory over it: God may suffer a man to labour and tugge, and yet profit nothing by his paines, but gives him grace, which is sufficient for him; hee gives his pardoning grace, though not his prevailing grace,

2. Cor.

5.

2Cor. 12.9. In this case *God* will beare much, though he cannot get the victory, yet he may get pardon.

6.

Sixthly, but there is another infirmity, that befalls us in peace and prosperity, that we are not sensible of, but are as it were in a sleepe, and forget our selves, and so let some infirmity steale upon us: and in this case, though it will not quite cut us off from *Gods* mercy, yet it will bring some great affliction upon us, whereby *God* doth waken us, and bring us unto our selves againe: So hee dealt with *Hezekiah*; no sooner was hee settled in peace and prosperity, but presently hee

he forgets himselfe, suffers pride to steal in upon him, for which wee know how the Lord awaked him. So *David, Psal. 30, when hee was in prosperity thought he should never be removed;* but then God hides his face, and makes him looke about him; therefore wee must remember this caution:

That though infirmities doe not cut us off from Gods mercies; yet if *voluntary infirmities*, in which our will hath a hand, if such as are not from weaknesse, and want of growth, but from sicknesse, if they be some particular weaknes in a strong Christian, if they steale upon

us by our owne sloath, and we are not aware, nor sensible of them ; then they will bring upon us some great crosse and affliction, and hinder us of some great blessings.

Caution 2.

The second Caution is, that yee take heed, that yee doe not mistake those infirmities that proceede from the regenerate part, for those sinnes that proceed frō the unregenerate; for these latter are rebellions, not infirmities; they are wickednesses, not weaknesses; and therefore we must beware, that wee do not mistake the one for the other.

To this purpose, it will bee needfull to know what

what an infirmity is, and this wee may doe by the contrary, if wee consider what strength is.

Now for this wee must know, that there is a two-fold strength.

First, *a naturall strength.*

Secondly, *a supernaturall.*

1.

2.

First, a naturall strength is that, by which wee performe the worke of Nature; this in it selfe is neither pleasing, nor displeasing to God, but as a Cypher, when it stands by it selfe is nothing, but a figure being set before it, it increaseth the summe: so this naturall strength neither pleaseth God, nor displeaseth, but as it is in a

regenerate man, or unregenerate man, so it helps, or hurts.

2

I

Secondly, there is a supernaturall *strength*, by which wee are enabled to doe more than Nature could helpe us to, and this is either for evill, or good things. First, there is a *supernaturall strength* that tends to evill, when as to the *naturall*, Sathan addes a *supernaturall*, to enable men to evill: such a *strength* have they who dyed for *Turcisme*, and the like; who kill Kings, &c. see how the Apostle sets out this, 2 *Thes.* 2. 9. 10.

Such a *strength* have they that write, & dispute
against

against the Truth, they have the *strength* of mad men, which wee say, are three men strong: So likewise there is a supernaturall weaknes, when to naturall imbecillity there is a superadded weaknesse: in the 8. of *Luke* 12. there we see that the first ground forgot the Word: why? through weaknesse onely? No; but Satan he helps on, *he comes, and takes away the word, &c.* And so we read of a more than natural unaptnesse to receive the Gospel, *2 Cor. 4. 34. The divell puts to his hand, he blinds their eyes, that the light of the Gospell should not shine to them: He helps forward the naturall weaknesse.*

Secondly, there is a supernatural strength to doe good, as *Christ bad his Disciples to stay at Jerusalem, till they were endued with strength from above, Luke 24. 49.* because they were to enter upon a great worke, above naturall strength; to wit, to preach the Gospel, therefore they had neede have strength above nature, because they were to preach the Gospel. This supernaturall strength wee may know by this; it will enable us to doe more than Nature can, it over-flies the reach of nature, or mortality, or common grace: Nature can doe as much as lyes in her power, or as is her worke:

worke: but there are some things which Nature, though never so well refined, can never reach unto. As Iron can doe as much as is in Iron, if it bee made bright, and fit for those severall uses it serves unto: But if you would have this Iron to turne to the North, it cannot doe it, till it bee touched with the Load-stone, and hath a higher quality added to it. So take the purest water, and it can doe what is in the power of water; it can moisten, coole, descend, or the like: but if you would have water to heate, to ascend, it must be by a supernaturall power, and by a super-

added vertue. And so take nature, and let it be refined with more vertues, and common graces, and it can doe as much as is in nature. But if you would have it love God, or some such higher worke, it cannot doe it; the water riseth no higher than the Spring from whence it came: So naturall men can ascend no higher than nature; and therefore for workes of a higher reach, there must bee strength from above to performe them.

Quest.

But what are those things which Nature cannot superficially enable a man to doe?

Answ.

Take the best of the
hea-

heathen, or the best natural man, and meere nature cannot enable him to doe these things following.

First, it cannot bring him to this, to preferre *God* before himselfe upon this perswasion, that his well-being doth depend more on *God*, than on himselfe.

I.

Secondly, it cannot enable a man to see sinne, as the greatest evill in the world, and so to hate it, and to looke upon *Christ*, as the greatest good in the world, and so to embrace him.

2.

Thirdly, nature cannot make a man resolute, not to part with *Christ* upon any tearmes, but willing

3.

rather to beare the greatest persecutions on the one side, and to refuse the greatest offers on the other side, than to part with his Christ.

4.

Fourthly, nature cannot make a man to love God, for this is a distinguishing property of a godly man, and so are all the other affections; now a naturall man cannot hate sin, cannot grieve for wickednes, as abomination to God: Take this for a rule, that howsoever naturall men may know much, and doe much, yet they have no spirituall affection; they have no spirituall love, harred, grieve, or joy.

5.

A fifth thing which nature

ture cannot do, and which this supernaturall strength doth, is this, it overcomes and subdues the lustrings of our owne spirits, and that not by restraint, but putting in it a contrary lusting; the *spirit* lusts against the *flesh*; this supernaturall strength of the Spirit, it hemmes us about, it comprehends and keepes us: *Acts 20. 22. Behold I goe bound in the Spirit* (saith St. Paul) *to Jerusalem*. When a mans owne spirit would fall loose, this supernaturall strength stayes and strengthens it; when God leaves any of the Saints to nakednesse & emptinesse of his owne spirit, hee becomes as another

nother man: as it was said of *Sampson*, they become weake as water; as wee see in *Elias*, *David*, and *Peter*. But when this supernaturall strength is within us, it sits at the sterne and guides us, and carries us through all. Now then if thou findest that thou hast any strength in thee more than natural, though it be but a little, all thy infirmities shall not exclude thee from the mercies of God in *Christ*.

Use.

Is it so? be not then discouraged for any of thy infirmities, but come boldly to the throne of grace: it is a great fault in *Christians*, if because of such, or such an infirmity they bee kept from

from the throne of grace,
or weaken their assurance:
It was the commendation
of *Iob*, who (notwithstan-
ding all his infirmities)
would not let go his righ-
teousnesse.

Iob 27. 5, 6.

Look upon *Asa*, his in-
firmities were many, as to
imprison the Prophet, to
trust to the Physitian more
than God, &c. Yet because
there was an uprightnes of
heart, see what testimony
the Lord gives of him in
the *2.Chron. 14. 3.* The like
in *Iehoshaphat*. So *David*
had many foule infirmi-
ties, yet because found at
the heart, God calls him, a
man after his own heart. So
Sarah (notwithstanding
her infirmities) is com-
men-

mended as a paterne to Wives. *1. Pet. 3. 6. Rahab,* her infirmities are passed over, and she commended for her faith and good workes. *Iam. 2. Hebr. 11.* And therefore (notwithstanding our infirmities) let us trust perfectly in the grace of Jesus Christ, and if wee see they doe abound, let us lay the more on Christ, as needing his helpe the more.

Use 2.

The second use is from the first Caution: seeing infirmities, though they doe not cut us off from Gods mercy, yet they may bring upon us many troubles; therefore let us take heed of them; it is not a smal matter to be subject
to

to infirmities: so it was but an infirmity in *Rebeckah* & *Iacob*, to compasse the blessing by indirect meanes.

But consider what it cost him, a great deale of grieve and paine: and see how deare *Davids* infirmity did cost him: So *Moses* , when he distrusted God, God would not suffer him to goe into the Land of *Canaan* ; these were all great afflictions, which their infirmities brought upon the, though they did not cast them out of Gods favour; therefore if we would avoyde such troubles, let us beware of living under infirmities.

The third use is from Use 3.
the

64 The S A I N T S

the second *Cantiō*, that we do not mistake rebelliō & wickednes, for infirmities and weaknes. Now seeing we may easily be deceived, let us try and examine our selves narrowly ; for it is the use of men to shroud themselves under infirmities; they say, *their meaning is good, &c.* but its their infirmity. And on the other side, many are upright in heart, & because they have infirmities, they think they have no grace; & therefore we had need to judge both with righteous judgment.

Now to helpe you in your tryall, consider first what an infirmity is : Secondly the signes of it.

First ; an infirmity is
such

such a weaknesse, as when the heart is upright, yet by reason of some impediment, it cannot doe that good it would, and doth the evill it would not. So that there must be first uprightness of heart, else it is not an infirmity, but iniquity; the heart must be perfect with God in all things, there must be a purpose to please God in all.

Secondly, the reason that it cannot doe so, is from some impedimēt that hinders: and this ariseth from the rebellion of his flesh, which leades him captive, makes him omit the good that he would do, and doe the evill he would not.

But now secondly, to come

come to the notes & characters: For a carnall man and a godly man, both bee guilty of one and the same infirmities, as to have their hearts wandring in praier, in reading, and to idlenesse in their calling, &c. Yet these may be wickednesse in the one, but weaknesse in the other; and therefore to know this, consider these Signes.

Signe.

First, if it be an infirmity, it continues not, but assaults thee by fits, and starts, and so away; and afterwards thou wilt return to thy former course: As a stone that is throwne up, it flyes as long as the force of the hand that threw it remaines; but after it takes

irs

its owne course againe:but if it continue upon thee,it is signe that it is natural to thee: As a stone, it rests upon the earth,because it is the naturall place of it: my meaning is not, but that an infirmity may assault a man all his life, for so some may, as wee shall shew afterwards: But I say,it comes by fits,and so is gone. This we see in *David*, in *Peter*, and the rest of the Saints, that their infirmities continued not so, but that afterwards they returned to their course againe.

Secondly, when a man amends not upon admonition, it is a signe it is not an infirmity; if a man intend s

tends to goe to such a place, and one should meet him, and tell him, this is not the way, and direct him into the right way, he would thanke him, and returne into the right way, because that is the way hee intended to goe. So if your faces be set towards *Jerusalem*, and one should tell you, here you went out of the way, yee would be glad of it, and returne.

So it was with *David*, when he would have flaine *Nabal* in a passion, and *Abigail* met him, and stayed him: oh how thank full he was to God, and her! it was a signe it was but an infirmity: and so in the case of *Uriah*, when *Nathan*

than told him, he was in the wrong : *Prov. 25. 12.* Hee that reproveth the Wise and Obedient, it is as a golden eare-ring, or as an Ornament of Gold, saith Solomon ; that is, hee whose heart is upright, whose intent is to grow rich in grace, accounts of those that reprove him him as golden ornaments : But if a man after admonition and reproofe will take his owne course, it is a signe of his wickednesse, and not infirmity.

Againe thirdly, a sinne of infirmity is alwayes with griefe and sorrow of heart for that weaknesse: now what is griefe, but the endea-

endeavour & strife of the will ; when a man cannot attaine to that he would, or would shun something he cannot avoyd, then he is grieved and pained : As it is in the body ; all the grieve there, is, when a part or member cannot performe its office or function : so in the soule, when it would faine doe such a thing, when the desire of the minde is set on such, or such an object, and it cannot attaine it, then followes grieve : so here, when the heart is drawne up to please God in all things, and something comes in the way that it cannot, & therefore it is grieved ; and therefore
in

in the 2 .*Cor.* 10. 11. the Apostle makes this sorrow a ground of their uprightness, and it is certain, where this griefe is not mingled, it is no infirmity.

Every sinne of infirmity, produceth a hearty complaint, and an earnest desire, and a serious endeavour to have it cured; for every infirmity in a body that is quickned, that hath some life in it, & so is sensible of it : As in a disease that a man is sensible of, he tells his friends, or any other that he is in company with, of it, to see if they can helpe him; if they cannot, he complains to the Physitian, and goes to him to have it cured : so in an infir-

4.

infirmity or sicknes of the soule ; an upright heart complains to his Christian friends, I have such an infirmity, what shall I doe to cure it? if they cannot help him, he runnes to him that hath the balme of *Gilead*, to *Jesus Christ* to have it cured, the *2. Cor.* 12. 8, 9. This was so in *St. Paul*, he prayed three times that it might be removed ; hee doth not only complaine, as in the 7. of the *Rom.* 24. and desire that it may be healed, as in the fore-named place, where hee prayes against it ; but to this he ads a serious endeavour, *1 Cor.* 26. 27. *he beats down his body, &c.* that is, hee used all good meanes for

for the overcomming of this infirmity : and where this complaint, desire, and endeavour is wanting, it is a signe it is not a mans infirmity, but iniquity.

Fiftly, if thy sinne be a sin of infirmity, thou shalt finde in thy selfe a continuall reluctancy, and strife against it : for as there is in thee a body of sinne ; so also a body of grace, which being contrary to the other, will not suffer thee to be at quiet ; the Spirit will be against the flesh, as well as the flesh against the Spirit : and as the flesh will not suffer thee to doe a good duty without resisting, and interrupting thee ; so neither will the

Signe. 5.

E Spirit

ſpirit ſuffer thee to ſinne without ſtriving againſt, and oppoſing it.

But if thou canſt ſit downe, and let it reſt without ſtriving againſt it, it is no infirmity, but rebellion; therefore try thy ſelfe by theſe ſignes:

Object. 1.

But others beſides true Chriſtians are able to doe this; for take an unregenerate man, and he wil make the ſame plea for himſelfe, that it is but an infirmity: Indeede hee is overtaken ſometimes, but it continues not; & when he is admoniſh'd or reproved, hee findes his heart yeelde to it, and hee grieves, and is ſorry for it; hee complains of it, and

and seekes to helpe it, and strives against it, and therefore these are not sure signes to distinguish him from another.

I answer, that there is something in an unregenerate man which is much like, and comes very neare to that in the regenerate man, he may doe much by that light hee hath, but yet there is a broad difference betweene them : for the regenerate man hath another object about which he is conversant, he hath a new light put into his heart, he is renewed in the spirit of his minde, and he hath the Law written in his heart, 2 Cor. 3. 3. Heb. 8. 10. That is, all the spirituall

Answ.

tuall duties that are written in the Law: and hee hath something in his heart that answers to what is in the Law, as Tally answers to Tally; or as that fashion in the lead, to that in the mold; or as in a seale character answers to character, impression to impression; so that which is in the Seale, the same is in the waxe: So whatsoever is in the Law of righteousness, if you could see that which is written in the heart by *Jesus Christ*, you should see character for character, print for print; and so, that if there were not a written Law, hee would be a Law unto himselfe to obey God,
per-

performe duties according to the Law written in his heart : Now when it stands thus with a man, and something, some impediment comes in the way, that he cannot serve God as he would, the Law of his members rebelling against the Law of his minde, then this troubles and grieves him, this hee complains of, and strives against, and labours to have it mended.

But now a naturall man hath not the Law thus written in his heart, hee hath all things revealed to him within his sphære, to wit, of *nature*, he ascends no higher : and although hee hath good purposes

Difference.

and meanings, and grieves and complaines, yet all this is for sinnes committed against common light, against naturall conscience, against the second table. Now this is in a lower sphere, they are sorry, but not godly sorrowfull, they cannot grieve for omission of spirituall duties, required in the first Table, and so wee see, they are not pitcht on the same objects which makes a greater difference. Now for the further and fuller clearing of this point, we will answer some questions or cases.

Quest. 1.

First, suppose I have striven long against such a lust, and done what I can,
and

and yet cannot prevaile
against it, shall I say that
this is an infirmity?

Ans.

To this I answer, first,
that wee may be, and are
often deceived in this,
when we have striven long
against it (yet wee grow
worse) and that the in-
firmity gets ground of us;
for an infirmity may ap-
peare to get strength,
when as it loseth it. As
when wee cleanse a Pond,
it appeares more muddy
than it was before, though
in truth it looseth mud
more and more. Every
contrary, the more it is re-
sisted, the more it appears;
as fire, the more cold is a-
bout it, the hotter it is: so
an infirmity, the more it is

resisted with the contrary grace, the more it appeares to prevaile, though in truth it loseth ground and strength.

2.

And therefore secondly I give this rule, that though you have striven, yet you must not leave off, but continue your striving still, and yet bee content with Gods hand in suffering such an infirmity in you: for there is a double contentment; first, that which is opposed to murmuring against Gods hand, and impatency, and so wee must be content to suffer an infirmity on us: wee must not repine at *Gods* proceedings.

Secondly, such a content-

tentment, as is opposed to striving against the infirmity, and so we must not bee content to suffer it on us, but must strive constantly against it : As in a naturall disease wee are to labour to have it cured : but if God will have it lye upon us, we must be content : So here wee should continually strive against our infirmities ; but if *God* see good to let it rest upon us, wee must be content with his hand : for God doth it that wee might have something to humble us, and Humility is the Nurse of grace, without which, all grace would wither and decay.

And againe, the power

of Gods rests and dwells in an upright heart, and that must have an empty place; and humility makes roome for this, when the power of God dwells in us, when it beginnes to settle in a mans heart : if hee now begin to grow up in conceit of himselfe, this expells the power of God, and crouds it out : And therefore GOD would have something to bee in us, to keepe us in an humble condition. It is with us as with *Paul*, when he looked on his infirmity; at the first he was impatient, would have no denyall at Gods hand, but have it removed ; hee prayed thrice, that is, often, to this

this purpose. But when he saw it was a medicine, which he thought a poyson, that it served to humble him, & by that meanes the power of God dwelt in him, then he was content, and so should we.

Againe thirdly, I answer, suppose you doe not get victory over your infirmity, and you be no better than you were before, nay, lose ground of it, yet strive still, for this strife makes you hold head against it, which otherwise you would not do: for if when you strive, you doe but keepe your ground, or lose somewhat, then what would become of you, if you did not strive

Answer. 3.

at

at all, should you not goe quite downe the streame, and lose all: yes certainly.

As a man that rowes against the streame, so long as he rowes, he does some good, loseth some ground, and getteth some; but if he leaves rowing, he goes quite downe the streame. And as a man may keepe the field against his enemy, though hee doe not conquer him, yea, though hee loseth ground; yet it is one thing to keepe the field, and another thing to bee beaten out, and overcome; now this continuall striving makes a man to keepe the field
against

against his infirmity, and not to be overcome, and therefore its worth the while to continue striving.

Lastly, I say, that 4. *Ans.*
though a man is sure of victory, and that his cause is never so good, and that hee goes on a good ground, yet God may in his wisdom so dispose of the matter, that hee may lose the victory for a time; as wee see the Israelites in a good cause were foyled twice by the *Benjamites*; and so the Disciples of Christ that were sent on his businesse to fish, they fished all night in vaine. And so
Moses

Moses, though he went on Gods errand, yet he prevailed not a good while, but the people were oppressed more than before, *Exod. 5.*

And so *Paul*, though he was called to goe to *Macedonia*, yet see in the story what a many lets he had, yet afterwards hee planted a Church there; so when wee strive against any sinnefull lust, our cause is good, and wee have a certaine promise, that we shall overcome; even as certaine a promise as *Ioshuah* had, that he should drive out the *Canaanites*, and overcome them, when the Lord encouraged

couraged him, saying, *I will not faile thee nor forsake thee.* So sure a promise have we in the first of *Luke*, ver. 74. *we shall bee delivered from all our enemies, that so wee might serve him in holines:* and therefore bee not discouraged, though thy infirmity hang long upon thee, but strive against it, and in the end thou shalt get the victory.

A second question is, whether an infirmity may hang on a man all his life, or no; for some men may say, I have had a sinne which haunted mee all my life hitherto, and may doe till my dying day, for ought as I doe

Question. 2.

doe know, and shall
I then say this is an infir-
mity?

Answ.

In this case we must
distinguish of infirmities,
for infirmities are either
occasionall, which are
occasioned by some other
accident; or habituall,
which stay longer by a
man, and these are either
naturall unto us, and so
proceede either from our
parents, and so are heredi-
tary to us, even as some
diseases are; and so we are
subject to the very same
infirmities that our Pa-
rents are: else they are
such, as arise from the
temper of our owne bo-
dies.

Such as proceed from
our

our naturall complexion,
or else such as proceede
from custome, which is a-
nother nature : now I say,
that occasionall infirmi-
ties, such as arise from
without, and such as come
from Sathan, these con-
tinue but for a fit, and doe
not last all a mans life,
God doth usually set Sa-
than a limited time : He
may give him liberty to
tempt a man, but hee
sets him his bounds, thus
long he must do it, and no
longer, usually I say, God
doth thus; for he may suf-
fer him to do it longer, but
seldom all a mans life. But
for our naturall heredi-
tary infirmities, these may,
and doe oftentimes conti-
nue

nue for tearme of life: for they have a roote in us. Now though you doe loppe off the branches, yet the roote will send forth more againe: I doe not say, that they so prevaile, as that they reigne in a man; for Grace will continually get ground against it: but it may remaine in a man so long as hee lives, and G O D hath a good end in it; for he would glorifie his Sonne in us, not onely at our first conversion, but all our life after; he would make us depend on Christ alwayes, as well for Sanctification, as for Justification: hee would make

us see what neede wee have of a daily Medi- atour, vnd therefore leaves dayly infirmities in our Nature to exercise us with, and to cause us to looke up to Christ, as the *Brazen Serpent* was lift up amongst the *Israe- lites*.

Another case may bee this, whether a sin against knowledge, and with de- liberation may bee said to be a sin of infirmity, or no?

Quest. 3.

To this I answer, that a sinne committed simply with deliberation, cannot be an infirmity: that is, let a man bee ever himselfe, without let or impediment, let him be his owne man, let the eye of his under-

Ans.

understanding be as when
the Sunne shines, and dis-
pell the mists, so that it
may see all before it; and
let his will and affections
walke at liberty: and in
this case a good man can-
not sinne deliberately.
See the ground of this,
Romans the seaventh, and
the seaventeenth *vers.* If
commit sinne, it is no more
I, but sinne that dwelleth
in me: That is, when I
am my selfe, my owne
man, not bound up with
any lust, I thus doe not
sinne, it is not I: But in
this case which is the usu-
all, and indeed all the case
of Christians, namely,
when any passion or inor-
dinate affection, or strong
distem-

distemper doth either
blind the eye of reason, or
tye up his affection, so
that he is not at liberty,
then I may commit a sin,
having long deliberated
on it. There may be such
distemper of affection as
may continue long, and
though it doe not wholly
blinde reason, yet it
blindes most of it. And
this was the case of *Da-*
vid in numbring the peo-
ple, hee deliberated on
it: *Ioab* tels him the truth,
and reasoned the case
with him, and yet he did
it: and so we know in mur-
dering *Uriah*, it was con-
sulted on, and a deliberate
actiō, but there was much
passion mingled with it:

David

David was not himselfe, there was some strong affection that did binde and tye up the use of the unregenerate part, as in drunkenesse ; that excesse binde up for a time the use of reason, so that he could not walke in the liberty of his spirit, and therefore it was his infirmity : Wee may see, that passion overcame *David* for the time, by his coming out of these finnes: For whenafter he came to himselfe, and saw the greatnesse of it, as usually when a sinne is committed, and not before) then we see the grievousnes of it ; then *David* confessed hee had sinned, and

and done very foolishly.

So a Christian may fall into a course of worldly mindednesse, or the like, and this lust may hang upon a man, and yet be a sinne of infirmity: 1. when a man is himselfe, hee sees it, and repents it.

Secondly, I answere, that in this deliberation, which is mingled with passion, there is a double error; namely, when a man erres either about the ultimate and last end, or when he erres onely in the meanes. Now a regenerate man hath set up God for his last end, whom he must never forsake, nor part with for all the

Answ. 2.

the world, but in some particular thing hee may erre: As when he thinkes hee may doe such a thing, and yet keepe his G O D still, or else he may get pardon of sinne quickly, or else minceth his sinne with distinctions, &c. and so may commit a sinne deliberately: for this is a true rule, that any sinne is a sin of infirmity, so long as we doeⁿ erre about the last end, though in some particular we are out, concerning the meanes and way to it.

But now an unregenerate man, he deliberates after this manner; I would have God for my God, I would not bee without
God

God in the World, but there is such a pleasure, such a profit, which I must needs have, and rather than hee will lose it, hee will part with God; thus hee makes pleasure his uttermost end. A man loves his life, and loves the use of his members; as of his hand, his arme, or his legge, &c. But hee had rather lose his hand, or any of his members than his life. So a wicked man covets his pleasure more than his life, hee cannot live if he have it not; and God hee esteemes but as one of his members, which hee would not willingly want: But a Christian hath God for his

F chiefe

chiefe end, and never sins with deliberation, about this end: he will not forget God upon any termes, but may erre in the way, thinking he may fulfill such a lust, and keepe GOD too.

Quest. 4.

Another question is, whether a regenerate man may not fall into some presumptuous sins, and so commit a sin that is not of infirmity?

Answ. I.

For answer to to this, we must know, that a presumptuous sinne is of two sorts: First, a sinne that is simply presumptuous, when wee know such a thing to be sinfull, and yet presuming on Gods mercy, wee will doe it; I say thus

thus a godly man cannot sin presumptuously.

2.

But there is a sinne that is comparatively presumptuous; to wit, in comparison of our other sinnes, which wee commit with more reluctancy, with more tenderneſſe of conscience: but some others wee commit more against knowledge, and are more our selves when wee doe them; these are comparatively presumptuous sins, and a godly man may sometime commit them: As wee see, it was *Dauids* case in the matter of *Uriah*, when hee plotted his death.

The end of the first SERMON.



THE
SECOND
SERMON,

BY

JOHN PRESTON,
Dr. of D.

Math. 12. 18, 19, 20.

18. **B**Ehold my ser-
vant whom I
have chosen,
my beloved, in whom my
soule is well pleased : I
will put my Spirit upon
him, and hee shall
shew judgement to the
Gentiles.

F 3

19. He

19. He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man heare his voice in the streetes.

20. A bruised reed shall hee not breake, and smoaking flaxe shall he not quench, till hee send forth Iudgement unto victory.



HAVE made choyce of these words for the Affinity they have with that Text, whereof wee have so lately spoken in this place, that out of this Text wee might prosecute the point already entred upon by occasion of the prayer of that good King in the former

mer Text : for Christ is heere brought in shewing Judgment to the Gentiles, and doing it in a meeke and tender manner, as *ver.* 18, 19. which manner is heere illustrated by the consideration of the persons to whom this Judgment was declared, or shewed, who are here expressed under the similitudes of a bruised reed and smoaking flaxe.

A Reed, the weakest plant, that is, not a strong Tree; yet this a broken one, none of the strongest : So Flaxe, that takes the fire a great deale sooner than a Reed will, especially if it be dry, and have hung neere the fire, but

most of all, if it be already smoaking, the least sparke will doe that; yet Christ will not quench that little sparke.

Then he shews the issue of this teaching, *till hee bring forth judgment into victory*: that is, untill that little sparke have got the mastery, or that hee may, &c. and so it is a reason of his tender dealing; because otherwise, it roughly dealt withall, it never would prevaile: As a little coale, if it bee hard blowne, is soone extinguished; but if nourished, and gently dealt with, increaseth to a mighty flame: So the least grace, though as weake as a bruised

sed, crushed reed, or as small as a spark of fire, that onely makes the flaxe to smoake, yet if cherished by Christ, it will increase, & come at last to victory; so that in these verses yee have foure things.

First, the office of our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, which is, to teach men judgement.

Secondly, the manner how he doth it; namely, with tendernes and meeknesse.

Thirdly, the persons, namely, such as are very weake in grace and holinesse.

Fourthly, the issue, namely, that *He will bring forth judgmēt into victory.*

For the first and second of these.

Doctr. 1.

The office (I say) of Christ, is to teach men judgment, and this hee doth with much tender-
nesse, compassion, and gentlenesse: for the former part, that Christs office is to shew men judgment.

1.

First, to teach men the just and righteous wayes of God; so the word is taken in the old Testament, to enlighten men to judge of the wayes of God. There be two ends why Christ came; first, to justifie, & secondly, sanctifie us, to give us forgiveness of sinnes, 3 *Act.* last, 5. *Acts* 31. therefore Christ is often compared

to

to a shepheard, in the 10.
of St. *John*, (and many
other places) that feeds
his flocke, and he is also
called *Iohn* 1.9. *the true*
light, which lighteneth the
world, and every man that
cometh into the world: that
is, if *Christ* had not come
into the World, there
would not have beene one
sparke of *GODS* image
left in man, neither *Adam*,
nor his posterity should
have knowne any thing,
but a cloud of darknesse
should have seized on
mens minds. But now by
Christs coming every
one, even the wicked
have this benefit, that
they have seene common
light: *Christ* lightens eve-
ry

ry one that commeth into the world, in some sort teacheth them so much as shal make the inexcusable.

2

It is his office to teach men, and he doth it in the next place, with much gentlenes and tendernes: this we will easily grant, if we consider who it is that teacheth, and who we are that are taught, a rude people, so hard to conceive, so ready to forget, therefore hee had neede have much gētlenes. We say whē one quickly conceives a thing, and then goes to teach it to another that cannot apprehend it, it will weary him, if hee bee not very meeke. An angry man, when hee findes any impe-
di-

diment, hee flyes on the face of it presently ; and a proud man, hee will not beare so much , nor wait lo long. But now Christ is meeke, and thinkes not much to waite from day to day, to drop in here a line, and there a line, here a little, and there a little : hee teacheth with much meeknesse; the reason is in the verse before ; Christ deales with us according to his nature and disposition. Now as it is said before, he shall not strive nor cry ; when the Pharisees would have killed him, rather than he would strive with them, hee departed, yeelding to them, went his wayes from them :

them. And againe it is said, neither shall his voice be heard in the streetes, al-
luding to an action of his, when he had wrought a great work, he had them not utter the matter: hee came not with pompe, and majesty as great men, that cannot come into a place, but the Towne must ring of them: he deterres no man by his greatnes, from comming unto him, but was of an humble and meeke disposition. And according as his Nature was, so he dealt with us, teaching us with much tenderneffe, and meeke-
nesse: then there is no reason, why wee should bee discouraged for any of
our

our infirmities, for Christ will beare with them. If hee were not God, and man; that is, if hee were not patient in an infinite manner, hee could not beare with us: but he is infinitely patient, therefore be not discouraged: in Ezekiel 34. 16. ver. hee compares himselfe to a shepheard, and (saith he) *I will seeke that which was lost, & bring againe that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and wil strengthen the weak: where we see, there bee foure causes of weaknesse.*

Causes 4.

First, men are apt to straggle out of the way through vanity and weaknesse

1.

nesse of their owne spirits. Now when a man doth so weaken and lose himselfe through his owne folly, then Christ seeks him, and will not suffer him to bee utterly lost.

David wandred as well as *Saul*, but God fought *David* againe, and would not lose him : therefore we see, that *David* delights to use this Metaphor in *Psal.* 119. 176.

Againe, a temptation may come on a man which is too strong for him, and drive him out of the way ; as sheep when theeves come, are driven out of the fold, whither else they would not have gone : these Christ promi-
seth

seth to bring back againe:
as *David recovered the*
sheepe out of the paw of
the Lyon and Beare, so
Christ will recover his
children that were carried
away with such strong
temptations.

Againe, suppose there
be some wound made in
the soule by some actuall
sinne, if there be some
breach made into the
conscience, Christ pro-
miseth in the next place
to make up this breach,
that he will binde up that
which was broken: a man
may complaine that hee
is weake, and ready to
straggle as before: there-
fore Christ promiseth to
strengthen that which is
weak,

weake, that is, he will lead them on to a greater measure of strength daily, whereby they shall be able to get victory over such infirmities: *Isaiah 40.*

11. Hee shall feed his flocke like a shepheard, hee shall gather the Lambes with his arme, and shall carry them in his bosome, and shall guide them with young: Here we see, that in the fold of Christ there is this difference of sheepe.

Some are strong that can goe apace; some are weaker, that cannot keep pace with the other, and they are compared to the Ewes with young, that can goe but a slow pace: Some are so weake, that they must

must be carryed, else they cannot goe. Now those that are so weake, that they cannot comprehend Christ, hee is ready to comprehend them: when man are weake, and have not that use of their faith which others have, to lay hold on Christ; Christ will lay hold on them, and carry them in his bosome, and those that are weake, and cannot keepe pace with others, he will guide them, and drive them on, according to their pace, and hee will drive on the strong according to their strength; and though hee beares with the weake, hee expects more from the strong:
See

See how *Iacob* ordered his flocke in that manner that he would not outdrive them : and shall not God doe so also, who hath taught the husbandman this discretion, *Isaiah* 28. use it himselfe ? Surely he will : in the 1. of *St. Iam.* ver. 5. *If any man lacke wisdom, let him aske it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth none, and it shall be given unto him :* That is, you shall finde this difference betweene God and man.

If one bee foolish, and goes to man, man is ready to despise him, and laugh at him: but if he aske wisdom at Gods hands, he gives it to him liberally, and

and twits him not with his folly, upbraides him not with his weaknesse: looke how a tender mother deales with her child, the more its weaknesse is, the more tender she is of it; so doth Christ guide us according to our weaknesse, and tender us the more, because wee are meeke and humble: and therefore wee have no cause to bee discouraged, for that weaknesse which wee finde in our selves. We are indeed exceeding backward to beleeeve this, and therefore see what's added: *Ezek. 34. 16. Hee saith hee will feede them with judgement*: That is, with wisdome and discretion:

tion: for he is wise, and knows how to feed them, according to their weak capacities, and so his Wisedome may bee a ground that he will tender us.

Againe, his power may shew that he will doe this with us, because hee is able to make crooked things streight: If a man meete with a crooked piece of wood, which he would streighten for his use, and cannot, hee throwes it away, because he cannot make it streight. Men if they are to deale with a Scholler that is hard to learne, they give him over, because hee is uncapable; they cannot make

make him conceive instructions. But Christ is able to make crooked waies streight, to quicken those that are dull, to put new natures into us; and therefore hee will not deale so harshly with us.

Againe, if there be any grace in us, it is his owne worke, and therefore it is for his credit to perfect it.

1 Thes. 5.24. vers. Phil. 1.

6. he should not be faithfull else, if he should not doe it; but he will doe it:

as a workman loves his owne workes, and will not leave them unperfect, so neither will Christ. A-

gaine, it is his Fathers wil, that those who are weake should be cherished, his delight

delight is still in leading them from one degree of strength to another ; for his power is more seene in them, and hee hath more thanks from them, as he had from *Mary Magdalen*.

Objection.

But some wil say, oh but my heart is so untoward, that I feare I never shall overcome.

Answ.

Consider wel that place the 42. of *Esay*, 5, 6. ver. Thus saith the Lord, Hee that created the heavens, & stretched them out ; hee that spread forth the earth, and that which commeth out of it ; hee that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walke therein : I the Lord have called thee, &c. Consider who

who it is that created the Heavens, the Earth, and the buds thereof; that giveth breath, &c. is it not God? Now then suppose he findeth nothing in the Nature of Man, but an emptinesse of grace & holines; is it not he that made the Heavens when there was none before? and then is not hee able to create grace in a mans heart?

Againe, looke on the earth in the Winter, it is very hard, a man would think it should never bring forth flowers, yet in the spring it puts forth many kind of fruits & flowers: so though thy heart be as hard as the Winter, yet God is able to make grace

G sprout

sprout forth there, as flowers in the spring; besides it is he that giveth breath unto the people; that is, if you looke upon all the creatures in the world, yet none was able to put life in them, but G O D. So though your soules be like unto a clod of earth; hee is able to put life into them, the breath of life, as hee did at the first; he is able to enlighten and enlarge them further, and therefore bee not discouraged for thy weaknesse.

Use 1.

Is it thus? that Christ teacheth in *judgment*, and that with much compassion and tendernesse? then this should incourage men to come unto Christ, to learne

learne of him, to take his yoke on them : this use we finde to be made of this Doctrine in the 11. of St. Mat. 28, 29. and 30. verses, *Come unto me all yee that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you : take my yoke on you, and learne of me, and you shall finde rest to your soules: for my yoke is easie, & my burden is light:* that is, let a man looke up- on *Christ* and his wayes, and usually they are discouraged with the strict- nesse of Religion, they thinke they shall bee too straight laced, and bound with fetters, that are too straight for them. No (saith *Christ*) feare not, for I am meeke and low-

ly, and such shall you finde my dealingsto be towards you.

There be two things in the Text to move us to come in to Christ, and to bee subject to his yoke.

1.

First, the nature of the thing it selfe, it is an easie yoke : Before you come to me, you are like men in prison ; but when you come to me, I loosen you, and set you at liberty : before you were as in darknesse, but when you come to me, I enlighten you : before you were as men in sicknesse, but when you come to mee, I strengthen and heale you.

A second thing, is from the person you have to deale with, that is, Christ: *Come unto me, for I am exceeding gentle, and meeke,* and such shall you finde mee: *John Baptist* and *Moses* came roughly, but Christ is come in tender-nesse, if you be subject to infirmities, hee is ready to passe them by; if you bee overcome with them, hee is ready to recover you: and therefore now come in to Christ; submit your selves to his yoke, to his teaching and discipline, to his rule and government which is so easie. But if you will not, he will rule you with a rod of Iron, and breake you in peeces

G 3 like

like a Potters vessell ; if you stand out with him, then none is so rough as he, and therefore observe him.

If a King should say at his Coronation, he would open all the prison-doors, would not offenders take that opportunity? or if a Creditor should say to his Debtors, come to me at such a time, and I will forgive you and your debts, and give you in your Bonds : would the Debtor over-slippe that time?

So let us, when Christ offers himselfe to teach us with such tendernesse, goe to him, take that time especially ; considering that

that these are such times
as are in Gods owne
power ; those things that
are in our owne power,
wee may doe what we will
with, and take our owne
time : but these times are
not in our hands, but in
Gods ; and therefore take
heed of over-slipping
that time, when Christ
carries himselfe as a Nurse
unto us : there is a time
for every purpose, and
that lasts but for a season,
Eccles. 3. 11, 12. There
is a certaine season which
God hath appointed for
every purpose, there is a
time when the businesse
may be well done, and
if that be let slippe, it
will not succcede, but hee

will be snared in an evill time, because hee knoweth not the good time.

Therefore when it is past, his misery is great. So chiefly there is a time of receiving grace, but this time a man knowes not, yet he is undone if he passe it; therefore take heed of overslipping any offer of grace: procrastination in all things is dangerous, but heere especially. Now that which deceives us, is the deferring: but we must not deferre one day, and say, then wee shall doe it another; no, for then we shall let the time be past: as in a chariot, the wheelles runne neere one another, but they never over-

overtake one another.
 And as in a clocke the
 minutes are but little di-
 stant one from another,
 yet none of them are to-
 gether : so the divell by
 his cunning thinkes to
 make you doe it now, and
 by and by, till hee have
 made you passe your
 houre: therefore take heed
 of deferring, and come in,
 whilst Christ doth ex-
 presse himselfe thus unto
 you in these rearmes,
 whiles he deales thus ten-
 derly and gently with
 you. It is a very dange-
 rous thing to lose the op-
 portunity of receiving
Christ when hee offers
 himselfe, when hee deales
 gently, which wee gather
 G 5 from

from that place, thus; if there be a time for every purpose, then certainly there is a time for the greatest businesse that a man hath to doe on the earth, that is, to come in to *Christ*, and receive him, and if the misery of man be great upon him, if hee let slip other seasons, much more if hee neglect this; but now there is a time for every purpose, as these places testifie. And to instance in some few, *Gehezi* tooke a gift of *Naaman*, 2. Kings 5. saith *Elisha* to him, *is this a time to take gifts?* There was a time when thou mightest have done it, at another time, of another per-

person thou mightest, but this was not a time : for *Naaman* was a stranger, and did not know the customs, and *Elisha* would give him his health freely, and therefore it was not the time ; and therefore wee see the misery was great, the leprosie clave to him and his posterity, because hee knew not the time ; so *Saul* because hee sacrificed before *Samuel* came, the thing hee did was good, but he tooke not the right time ; he was too hasty, he knew not his time ; and so his misery was great upon him ; God tooke the kingdome from him, and gave it to his neighbour, 1 *Sam.* 13. 13,

14. So *Jacob*, when hee sought the blessing, hee thought hee did a good thing, but hee did not stay the time, so the misery was great upon him: see what a long peregrination, what a hard service hee did undergoe under his Uncle *Laban*, and all because hee knew not the right time. So the *Israelites* when they sought a King, if they had stayed their due time, God would in his due time have revealed unto them, that *David* should be their King, for hee had so appointed it: and therefore because they missed of the time, their misery was great on them; so likewise for other purposes,

poses, so for this there is a time for a man to come in, and take the offer that *Christ* makes, a time when he is kind and gentle, and ready to receive us, if wee know not this time, and so over-slip it, our misery will bee great upon us. Now then it is very requisite to know and finde out this time ; because if wee choose Gods time, God will joyne with us in the worke, and so it will bee done with ease, *Ecles. 3. 9, 10. A time to love, &c.* what profit hath hee that worketh, in that wherein he laboureth? I have seen the travell which God hath given to the sonnes of men, to be exercised in it : (that is)

is)men take much travell and paines to bring their purposes and ends to passe; when they doe not take Gods time, and what profit have they by it?

Now if you will open when Christ knocks at the doore, harken to the motions of the Spirit, and blow them, and nourish them, and it will bee done with much ease; but if you misse this time, your misery is great; you may desire, and cry, and pray, and never the better; Eccles. 9. 12. For a man also knoweth not his time; as the fish is, that is taken in an evill net, and as the birds that are caught in a snare, so are the sonnes of men

men snared in an evill time, when it falleth suddenly upon them : There is a double time, as wee may gather out of these words ; a good and acceptable time , so called, because God is then ready to accept and receive us, if wee come in that time ; and if we doe not make use, and embrace that good and acceptable time, then the evill time shall fall upon us, we shall be caught in an evill net and snare: there may be a good net come on us, as affliction, sicknesse, and the like, may come upon us, so as to doe us good, as we catch at some things to preserve them alive for
a bet-

a better condition than they were in : but now if we over-slippe the good time, than the evill net shall fall upon us ; sicknesse, death, and destruction shall come on us suddenly as a snare : that we may see the ground of this, see what Christ saies, *Luk. 19. 42, 43.* *If thou hadst knowne, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes : He speakes it to the Iewes, who yet enjoyed the ministry of Christ, and he tells them that the time of their visitation was past.*

So that a man may have
the

the liberty to live under the ministry, long after that God hath rejected him: Christ came then and visited the *Jewes*, & al profited nothing; then they were like the Figge-tree that *Christ* cursed, after their day was passed: and this day may belong before a mans death, he may live long rejected: and therefore let us take heed we doe not stand out our time. In outward things wee are wont to anticipate and prevent time: so *Iacob* got the blessing before the time: and the *Israelites* sought for a King before the time: and so men would be hastily rich; and so for pleasures,
if

if wee should stay Gods time, to take it after labour, we should doe well, but we prevent our time here ; but in spirituall things we are too slow, let slip our time, to come after : But this is dangerous, take heede of it : It's a good note which the *Stoicks* have : some things are in our owne power, and in them we may use our owne liberty ; but other things are in the power of others, and then we must take the opportunity while it's offred ; wee must faile when the winde blowes. Now of this latter kinde are spirituall things, and therefore wee must take the time that's

that's offered : Indeede if the time were in our owne power, or if we knew the time, then we might delay : *Act. 1. 11.* It is not for us to know the times which the Father hath kept for his owne power, and no man knoweth what shall bee, neither can any tell it him, and therefore take heed of letting slippe the time: Sathan deceives us in this, just as the Lapwing doth, when a man is neare her nest, shee flyeth a little before a man, and then lighteth, and flyeth a little further, till it hath led us quite out of the way.

So Sathan makes us
deferre

deferre a little longer, and a little longer, until our time bee past; and therefore deferre now no longer, but come in unto Christ, whiles hee offers Himselfe in a loving and tender manner: And so much for the Office of Christ, which is to teach, and his manner of Teaching, with much Meekenesse and Gentlenesse.

Now followes the third thing to be considered, & that is the persons that *Christ* hath to deale with, such as are very Meeke; compared here to a bruised Reed, and smoaking flaxe. A Reed is of it selfe very Weake, and shaken with

with every Wind, and not only so, but broken with the least force. So a Christian may be subject to much unevennesse, and inconstancy in his Wayes, shaken with every Temptation; but when this shal be a broken Reed, this is a further degree of Weaknesse: and so for smoaking flaxe, it must be an exceeding little sparke which will not cause flaxe to smoake, and yet with such weake ones hath *Christ* to deale: He will not breake the bruised Reed, nor yet quench the smoaking flaxe.

Now from the persons that *Christ* teacheth, that is, weak ones, observe this poynt.

That

That there may be exceeding great weaknesse in true Christians; wee see in the Text they are compared to the weakest things, a bruised reed, and smoking flaxe: the first reason of it is this:

Reas. 1.

Because it pleaseth Christ in working grace, to doe it by degrees; he might have perfected the worke of Grace altogether, as he did in the work of creation in an instant; but hee dealeth with us now according to the course of generation; as a plant is first sowne, then riseth by degrees: So we in the beginning of Grace are exceeding small; he heales us as hee did the blind

blinde man, not altogether, but by little and by little.

First, we see more darkly and confusedly, and then more clearely; and he heales our lamenesse, not altogether by setting us on our feete at first, but hee gives us strength by degrees: first to goe on crouchies, as it were, or to creepe or steppe forward and afterwards to goe more strongly; and hence it is that there are many weake, because grace is but weakly wrought in them. Now the reason why Christ doth thus lead us on by degrees, is first to humble us, and to let us see that the worke is not of
our

our selves, it is God that works in us according to his good pleasure ; for when we are brought on by degrees thus, it makes it evident unto us, that we receive strength from another. Secondly, he doth it for his owne glory, that we might know the righteousness of *Christ*: in the 8. of *Dent.* 2. 17. there is set down these two ends, why the Lord led them through the wilderness, and not the nearest way.

First, Gods end in it was to humble them,

Secondly, to let them know that he did it for his owne sake : So hee doth heare to humble them,

them, and for his own glory, God doth not perfect grace at the first, but by degrees, and likewise that they may know his power, that it is his strength in which they walke, that if a Christian should bee left to himselfe, he would quickly finde that it is *Christs* power that hee must walke in, that must goe along with him to guide him, and to deliver him from his enemies.

Now for the use of this it may serve to comfort weake Christians; what though thou art not at that growth as other Christians are? yet bee of good comfort: a Reed hath life in it as well as the strong-

Use.

H

est

est Oake, what though thou canst not see the flame of an holy conversation, but onely the fume? yet you may know there is fire: men that are in the Covenant, are like men that are gone in at a doore or into a Church, or the like. Some are further in than others, but yet all are in; So though the weak be not so forward as another, yet hee may bee in, though not so farre in: for a budd drawes sappe from the roote, as well as the fruite: why so thou maist be a budd, and have grace in some measure, though not in so great a measure, yet thou mayest bee a true Christian, though

though a weake Christi-
an.

But you will say that it
is a hard thing to be per-
swaded, that God will
accept of such a weakling
as I am.

Object.

Therefore consider the
nature of *Christ*, for we
are deceived in that as in
other things, in 2. of the
Hebr. v. 17. Wee see that
it behoved *Christ* in all
things to be made like unto
his brethren, that hee might
bee a mercifull and faithfull
high Priest, &c. *Christ* is
our High-Priest, now there
are 3 offices of our High-
Priest.

Ans.

First, he was to receive
every sacrifice.

Secondly, to offer sacri-

*Three offices
of Christ.*

fice daily.

3.

Thirdly, ~~to~~ lay the Wood together, and preserve the fire.

Now then it belongs to *Christ* to receive every sinner that comes to Him, as it did to *Aaron* to receive the Sacrifice; and if *Christ* should not doe all that belongs to his office, He should be an unfaithful High Priest: But He is called a faithfull High Priest: If then a sinner come to *Christ*, and saith; Lord I know that God is a consuming fire, and I dare not come to Him in my selfe, but in the Merit of that Sacrifice which thou offeredst: *Christ* cannot reject Him; but sayes He to him:

him : Come unto me, and I will receive you : if they do but come, he cannot but receive them, else He should be unfaithfull in his office, and in his promise : But He is faithfull in both, and not only so, but Hee is a mercifull High Priest, and so will pittie them that come unto him: and if you have many sins daily renewed, many infirmities and imperfections : Why, it is *Christs* office to renew the Sacrifice daily, He offers up a daily sacrifice for us, even His owne righteousness: and as He doth this for justification, so for sanctification also. When Sacrifice was laid on the Altar,

the Priests could not bring fire from Heaven to consume it; but God sent it, and so shewed that it was accepted: we may lay the Wood together, but cannot bring fire from Heaven: But Christ is a Priest of an higher order than was *Aaron*; hee will kindle this fire of Sanctification, and encrease it, and keepe it still burning, it's his office so to doe; and therefore doubt not but Christ will receive you.

Objection.

Oh, but this were some comfort, If I had assurance that I had but one sparke of true grace in me: therefore how shall I know that?

I an-

I answer, there bee five *Answer.*
signes laid downe in the *5. Signes.*
Text, whereby a man
may come to know this.

First, in these words,
*He will bring forth judge-
ment into victory:* That is,
the first thing that *Christ*
doth, even to set up a
right Judgment in thee:
When the Apostle prayes
for the *Philippians*, hee
prayes, *That they may a-
bound in Knowledge and
judgment.*

1.

Secondly, there is life
in a bruised Reed, as in the
strongest Oake.

2.

Thirdly, there is
fire, though never so
small, as in the strongest
Oake.

3.

Fourthly, there is

4.

a Combate.

5.

Fifthly, there is victory.

I

Now for the first of these, consider whether Christ hath set up his judgement in thee: when the Apostle prays that the *Philippians* may *abound in Knowledge and in all Judgment*: That is, that they may discern of things that differ, and hee takes it for granted that it was right, else hee would not pray for the increase of it.

So that when a man can discern of things that differ, when hee can put a difference betweene the wayes of God and sinne,

fin, between spirituall pri-
viledges, and outward va-
nities, between truth and
falshoods: Then there is a
Light come into a man,
and this makes them pure
and blameles, fills them
with the fruits of righte-
ousnesse: now then if thou
hast this in any Degree,
thou hast the spirit of
Christ: As it was in
Christ, *Esay* 11. 2. 3. *Hee*
had the spirit of wisdom,
and understanding, the spi-
rit of might, the spirit of
knowledge and of the feare
of the Lord. So is it in all
his Members: they have
the same Spirit, and doe
not judge according to
the sight of the Eye, or
the Hearing of the Eare,

but judge righteously, for there is a two-fold judging, first, when our eye or eare judge, and we judge according to that ; when wee send out our spirits and heare what they report, and this is ready to bring in a false report, to say that sin is sweete & pleasant, and it will represent grace as vile, because it judgeth according to outward appearance, and the outside of Christianity is base, in regard of misreports, that are brought up of it ; As the tenne messengers brought an evill report upon the land of *Canaan* ; and in regard of the outside of it in those that professe it, who are
many

many times poore & contemptible men, & in regard of the infirmities and failings of the Saints; Now if a man judge by the eye, that sees nothing but the outside, hee will esteeme of religion as base. But it is otherwise when a man hath the spirit of judgement, hee will looke further into things; he pries into the inside, and then he will not judge of the wayes of God, and of sin as the world doth; But will see a basenesse in sin, and an excellency in Religion, because hee is enabled to judge aright.

For *Christ*, as he makes his Princes and Priests, so hee makes them Prophets likewise,

likewise, to judge and discern of things aright, and this hee doth by opening the eyes, *Acts* 26. 18. that is, good things in themselves are very excellent, and desireable, but wee see them not till our eies are opened, there is a vaile drawne over our eies till *Christ* removes it, and opens them.

Question.

Answer.

What is that?

Why, *Christ* hee elevates and raiseth up that light which wee have, unto an higher degree, and that is by putting a new light into their soules, *Iohn* 1. 9. that is, the true light, which lightneth every one that commeth into the world.

Before the Creation

was

was compleate there was some light ; the first day after the Sunne was created, and after the fall hee enlightned every one that came into the world:(that is) all men have some light or other by Jesus Christ ; before there was no sparke of light in us, but all that wee have is by Christ : that glimmering light which is in naturall men, is but a sparke of the new Image, which Christ hath put on us : But in this, Christ raiseth up the light higher and higher ; and when this new light is put in us, then a mans eyes are said to be opened, when hee can see round about him, and

and discerne that excellency in grace, and that baseness in sinne, which were in them before, but they could not see it. As the Chariots and Horsemen were with *Gehezi*, but his eyes were not opened to see them : And so the Well was neare *Hagar*, but shee saw it not till God had opened her eyes, and shewed it unto her.

So death and destruction may bee very neere an unregenerate man, and he not see it till God opens his eyes : So also a *Christian* may have ground of comfort, and he not know it till God sheweth it unto him : Now where a mans eyes

eyes are opened, that he can see thus round about him, then hath Christ set up this judgement in a man.

But here now all the businesse will bee to discern betweene the common judgement of a man, and this right judgement which Christ sets up in him, which difference is seene by these particulars.

First, they differ in the authors of them: another mans judgement is borne and bred with him; but this comes from above from God: it is a new judgement; yea, a renewed judgement, *Ephes. 4. 23.*

Be ye renewed in your spirits

rits & minds: When thou hast such a judgment of sin and godlines which thou hadst not before, this is a new judgment.

Secondly, they differ in regard of the subject: this new light is alwayes in a pure Hart; the other, not: so long as the Heart is overwhelmed with lusts, so long the Eye of the Soule is dimme, as in a Mist, that we cannot see before us: but Christ takes away this Mist: *Titus 2. 11. 12. 13. 14. When the Grace of God hath appeared, &c.* Then we see clearely; Whereas the unregenerate man never judgeth aright of an Holy Way: because his Hart is full of lusts, which
are

are as mists, that they cannot see.

3
Thirdly, they differ in the measure. Common light wil perswade you of cōmon truth, or of truths in generall, that such and such things are commendable; but if you come to a particular action, and practise that, you must doe this, and this, here it failes him: But this right judgement helps a man to doe particular actions; it enlightens him in every particular; takes away all objections, and guides you in the right way, 2.Tim.2.7. *Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things,* (that is) I have told thee these things

things in generall, but when you come to particular, the Lord must direct you.

4.

Fourthly, they differ in the growth : this right judgment growes more and more, it is as the light that shines clearer & clearer, till it be perfect day: *Esay 42. 3, 4. Hee shall bring forth judgment unto truth* : when this judgment is put into a man, every thing adds something to it: A good heart makes use of every thing, but another man that hath but a common sight hee doth not grow, but is apt to be offended, and at length that light that hee hath turnes into injudiciousnes
of

of minde, you shall find it decrease more and more,
2. Tim. 3. 13. evill men waxe worse and worse, for that light of theirs is but like a flower, which when it is at the best, fades, and decaies; and the reason of it is because God giveth a man leave to use that common wisdom that he hath for a time, but when they doe not improve that knowledge that they have, then God takes it away from them, and turnes it into foolishnesse, as wee may see *Rom. 1. 25. Because they changed the truth of God into a lye,* therefore they were given up to vile affections: *1. Cor. 1. 19. God will*

will destroy the wisdom of the wise, & bring to nought the understanding of the prudent.

5.

Fifthly, they differ in the effects wch they produce, for first this right judgement brings forth poverty of Spirit, when as before a man thought hee had some good things in him; now he sees He is nothing. Saving wisdom makes Him see himselfe empty of all that was good, makes him see that before He knew nothing, as he ought to know; but now common judgment breeds pride, it puffes a man up, 1 Cor. 8. 1. 2. and makes Him preferre himselfe before his brethren.

Se-

Secondly, this right judgment, it causeth a man to know every thing, as they ought to know it, when He knowes a right use of it : as for Example, a man that knowes his ground which hee owes, when hee knowes what Graine it will best beare, what tillage and manure is best for it, then a man knowes his toole as hee ought, when hee knowes how to use it as hee ought.

So a man that knowes sinne as he ought, when he lookes upon it so as to lose it, and loath it, then knows he the promises as he ought, when he makes that use of them, as hee should

should make; when as other men mind them no more than their old shoos; and then wee know forgivenesse of sinnes as wee ought, when we think it the most precious thing in the world : and so if we knew earthly vanities as we ought, wee would weane our selves from them; yea, from all worldly things : as the lusts of the flesh, and pleasure, the lust of the eye and riches, honour, and pride of life, or any other excellency in the world, bee it what it can be, wee will not then endure it.

Now when a mans eyes are opened, and he is savingly enlightned, and knowes

knowes these things as he ought, then he lookes on carnall pleasures, and sees they will bring bitternes in the end: when he looks upon riches, hee sees that to be true which is sayd of them: Why wilt thou set thy heart upon them, which are as nothing? hee sees they are uncertain, insufficient, and not able to satisfie his soule: And for the pride of life, or any excellency which before he greatly prized, now he accounts it vile and contemptible, this the spirit of right judgement enables a man to doe.

Thirdly, the singlenesse of the eye is another effect of this, it teacheth
a man

a man to looke on things with a single eye : *Math. 6. 22, 23.* There is mention made of a single eye, and of an evill eye: if a man hath a single eye, hee will not looke on God and on the world, but on God alone, cleave to him, and serve him alone ; the other is called a wicked eye, because there be many lusts on which it looks, But this right Judgement makes us looke on God singly, abstracted from all other things.

4.

A fourth effect which this right Judgment pronounceth, is, Conversion of the whole man unto God : *if thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light,* (that

(that is) shall bee set straight ; and when this is not done, it hinders our conversion unto God, as wee may see in the 13. of *Matth.* 15. wee cannot look on other things, and turne our eyes upon God at the same time.

Fifthly, this right judgement it fits up, and makes a man willing to bee guided by the Word of God, by the ministers, or any servant of God, a Childe may lead him, the weakest Christian may lead him, if they bring spirituall reason, as naturall men are led by reason, so these by the Word of God.

Sixtly, it makes a man able to practise that hee
I knowes,

5.

6.

knowes, whereas another man knowes much, practiseth little, but this judgement brings forth practice, this knowledge will lead us into action, & so much for the first signe, whereby we may know whether Christ hath wrought any sparke of grace in us, namely if hee have set up his judgement in our hearts.

2.

Now for the second; this is such a judgement as begets life: a Reed hath life as well as an Oake: now if you would know if this life be right or no, you shall know it by the heate, there is fire: so if wee would know if this bee right, see it by the cōbate; if

if you would know if that
be right, try it by the
victory: well then, now
wee have to speake of the
second signe; Consider
though you bee weake,
whether you are not as a
bruised Reed yea or no,
which hath some life,
some strength in it. *A brui-*
sed reed will bee not breake,
here we wil consider three
things.

2.

First, that there must be
some strength and life in
the weakest.

1.

Secondly, this strength
is subject unto bruising,
A bruised reed, &c.

2.

Thirdly, that Christ
will heale all these bruises,
hee will not breake the
bruised Reed, but will
I 2 bring

3.

bring forth Judgment
into victory.

For the first of these
there must be a Reed wch
hath some life in it : Now
life is such a faculty wher-
by creatures move them-
selves in their owne pla-
ces, so say Philosophers:
other things that have not
life, may move them-
selves when they are out
of their owne places: as a
stone when it is out of its
owne place, moves down-
wards, and fire heere be-
low, being out of its place
moves upwards; but no-
thing can move it selfe in
its place, but that which
hath life in it; To apply
this to our purpose, who-
soever moves himselfe in
the

the wayes of God, hath life in him; There bee many things may move us towards God, as good education, a powerfull ministry, good company, and the like, as *Joash* and *Amaziah*, were good while their good friends lived, but all this doth not argue life in us, because they are but extrinsecall causes, as a hand may make a stone move upwards, the stone hath not life therefore; but when a man is so farre enlightned, so fashioned and formed by **Jesus Christ**, that hee judgeth aright of the wayes of God, and being thus formed, hee moves himselfe to doe good,

then he is said to be alive, when *Christ* shall set up Iudgement in the heart of man, to see the evill of the wayes of sinne, and the good that is in the wayes of God, even then, hee moves towards those wayes naturally and willingly, such a one hath life in him: Let some consider this, that live in the Church, under good Tutors, or Masters, or Parents, that are carried on in a crowde of good company, they may doe much, and yet have no life, because it may proceede from an outward cause; not from an inward perswasion of the heart, of the goodnesse of the wayes where-

wherein they walke.

There is a two-fold perswasion: one is, that the waies of God are good; a bare perswasion onely, and yet this stirres not men up to walke in these wayes; but it lyes dead in the heart.

But there is another perswasion which is ingrafted in the heart, that moves a man to new obedience: 1

Iam. 21. 22. So wee shall finde there a double expression of light: one, which barely shewes men all evill and good: But there is another light; with life, *Ioh. 8. 12.* *Hee that followeth me, shall have the light of life*: It is an *Hebraisme*, he shall have

the light of life, that is, the lively light : *Ephes. 5. 14.*

Awake, from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

I The first difference between them, is, the one reveals the waies of God, but so, that the affections are not moved, the hands are not set on worke.

2. But the other is, when that the wayes of God are so revealed, that we see an amability, an excellency in them ; and so, that we lift up our hearts unto the waies of the Lord, as before we did unto vanity, (that) is we desire earnestly to walke in them.

Con-

Consider how you lifted up your hearts to riches, pleasures, and other earthly vanities ; if now you so lift up your hearts to walke in his wayes ; then here is that inward perswasion ; that lively light wrought in you ; that life whereof wee speake : This life is nothing else but that which the Scripture calleth faith.

Now there is a dead faith spoken of: and how shall wee know it to bee dead? Thus, when it stirs us not up to good works: And how shall wee know it is living? when it moves us willingly and readily to duties of obedience,

Christ dwels in the heart by faith, so faith St. *Paul*, *The life I now live, is by faith in the Sonne of God, Gal 2.20.* (that is) there are two men that looke on Christ; one lookes on him, beleeves all the promises, all threatnings, all his Word, opens his heart, and lets Cbrist come in, and rule, and doe there what he list.

Another faith (if you aske him) that he beleeves all this, but we shall know it by this: because it doth not make him moove forwards unto new obedience: now according to our life that is in us, so is our strength, the lesse life, the lesse strength, *Revelations*

tions 3. 8. The Church of *Philadelphia* is said to have a little strength: now if you would know whether you have true strength or no : you must distinguish between life and strength, to wit, the least degree of strength will first enable a man to do all things in some measure ; though not in that measure you should: it will enable you to love God, to beleeve, to pray, &c. you can doe something of every thing. *Phil. 4. 13. I can doe all things through Christ that strengthneth mee.*

Secondly, though it doe not reach the highest degree, yet it aimes at it, and

Phil. 3. 14,
15.

hath a desire to come to it: After he had said, he had not yet attained to perfection, but aimed at it, made forward toward it: he adds, let as many as be perfect, be thus minded: the least spark of fire wil endeavour to rise above the aire, as well as the greatest, and where true strength is, it wil endeavour to be stronger.

3.

Thirdly, this is not an empty levelling at it, but it grows up to it; so doth not other common strength; there is a strength in iron to resist violent stroakes, and in a rock to resist the force of the waves, but this is not a vital strength; so in other men there may
bee

be strength of resolution, but it is not a selfe moving strength, & therefore it continues as it was, & growes not; but in vitall strength, there is a period to which it growes, & never rests til it comes up to it, as we see in plants, and other living creatures, and men, they grow up to their full strength: so *Christians* have their period which they grow up to, & this period is perfect holines, w^{ch} they cannot attaine to in this life: and therefore they are stil growing so lōg as they live. Now then see if you have such a strength; & if you can find that you have, then there is life in you: and that is the first that

that hee propounded to shew, that there must bee some life, some strength.

2.

The second thing was; that this strength is subject to much bruiling; *A bruised reed will he not breake:* A weak Christian, though hee have not the strength of a man, yet he hath the strength of a child; though not of a tree, yet of a plant; and such strength is subject to bruifings, and the lesse strength, the more subject to bruifings, as we see in plants.

Now bruifings are of two sorts, and both arising from sinne.

I

The first arise from sin as it is unpardoned, (that is) as you apprehend sin to be

be unpardoned, the more ready you are to be bruised.

The second sort ariseth from sinne as it is unmortified, when a man sees still that sinne growes up, which he had thought he had cut downe, he is ready to be bruised. The former sort is contrary to the grace of justification, the latter to that of sanctification, now *Christ* hath promised to heale these bruises, ^{wh}ch is the third thing to be considered, let those therefore that are thus weak, cōsider this promise heere, that *Christ* will heale all these bruifings, and so all other, the promise for this purpose that he

2.

3.

* hee will heale these bruifings, which arise from our doubting of justification, *Esay* 61.1, 2, 3, 4. ver. this is the bruifing for which *Christ* came into the world, to preach glad tidings to the weake, and to binde up the broken hearted, to proclaime liberty to the captives. Therefore if a poore soule would goe to *Christ*, and say thus, *Lord* I am bound with a chaine of my sins, and thou camest to set such at liberty, *Christ* hee would doe it; for hee was annointed for that very purpose.

2.

And so for the bruifings that arise from sinne unmortified, why *Christ* hath

hath promised not to leave thee to thy selfe, nor forsake thee, but will destroy all the workes of the divell in thee ; therefore goe to *Christ*, and put him in mind of his promise, and say, Lord I am one of them to whom this promise is made, I am as a bruised reed, and as smoaking flaxe ; and thou hast promised, not to breake a bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flaxe : put *Christ* thus in minde of his promise, and he wil heare, & help, & heale thee. But now here are some cases of conscience to be resolved.

Cases of conscience.

First, some will be ready to say, that they have none of these bruises, that they

Quest.

they are not thus weary and heavy laden, because they cannot grieve for sin, so much as for other things.

Answ. I

To which I answer, there may bee some violent and sudden griefe, which may exceede griefe for sinne, as *Dauids* griefe for *Absalom*; but here is the difference, the griefe for sinne is constant and perpetuall, but the griefe for some losse or the like, is but for the present. Now a spring that runnes and is never dry, yeeldes more water than a land flood, which for the present seemes greater, but is soone dried up: so griefe for sin, is like water that runnes from

from a spring, which continues ; and griefe for other things, is like a land flood which lasts not long.

Againe, they differ in regard of the termes of this sorrow : when a man hath lost a friend, hee lookes on it as a totall and irreparable losse, and so grieves the more, and so in like manner, if we should look on the favour of God, as a thing irrecoverably lost, his griefe for this would exceed the other. But because hee alwayes conceives some glimpse of Gods favour, in the midst of this mourning, therefore this griefe seems the lesse, though in regard of

of continuance it be greater.

2. *Case.*

Oh! but I have not attained to a just measure of bruisednesse.

Answer.

If there be such a measure of bruisednesse in thee as brings thee home to *Christ*, thou hast attained a sufficient measure, to bring thee to heaven. But this distinction must be remembered, that there is a double bringing of a man home to *Christ*.

I

One is, when a man is brought so farre towards *Christ*, as to bee willing to take the crowne, and partake of the priviledges onely, but this is not sufficient; but when thy sorrow shall so bring thee home

home to Christ, that thou art willing to take Christs yoke on thee, to subject thy selfe to Christ in all things, so much sorrow and bruisednesse as this, is sufficient to bring thee home.

Oh, but though I am thus farre bruised, that I am willing to beare Christs yoake, and to doe that hee shall command me; yet I doe not finde that this promise is performed to me; God hides his face from me, and I cannot finde him; whom my soule loves, and that I cannot finde that my sins are pardoned: and so for bruises belonging to sanctification: I have striven
long

3. Case.

long against such a lust, and cannot see it mortified any whit.

Ans.

To this I answer, that *Christ* in with-holding the Comfort, and suffering thee to bee more laded, doth ever fulfill this promise here made, *Math. 11. 28. Come unto me, &c.*

Object. 1.

But the Objection might be made: We have come unto thee, and yet finde no rest: *Christ* therefore addes: *Take my yoke on you, & learne of me, &c.* The yoke of *Christ* is the government of *Christ*, the taking of this yoke upon us, is the subjecting our selves to this government.

2. Things.

Now the government of *Christ* consists
in

in two things.

First, it commands us to doe many things.

I.

Secondly he will have us to suffer many things: and if we take Christs yoke upon us, we must do both. Now a man is willing to doe many things; that *Christ* commands, but stoppes at some things; there is some thing, some duty, which he wil not do; as prayer, giving of almes, or some other: and so also for suffering, he is willing to endure some things for *Christ*, but there is something again, which he cannot endure: Reproches, Scoffes, and the like. If therefore God hold off comfort for any long season,

2.

son, let a man looke well to his spirit, and see if he be perfectly willing to take Christs yoke upon him; if he were, the promise is certaine and shall be made good, hee shall finde rest to his soule: and if he doe not, there is some fault in himselfe. In the tenth of *Iudges*, ver. 10. to the end of the *Chapter*, there the people were burthened, and cryed unto the Lord, and yet found no rest: but God deferres comfort, and tells them, he would deliver them no more; then the people submitted themselves unto God, saying, *Doe with us what pleaseth thee, and put away their strange Gods,*
ver. 16.

ver. 16. *and served God.*
Now when the children
of *Israel* were brought to
this, to cast away the
reliques of Idolatry, and to
serve the Lord perfectly,
then it is said : *The Lords
Spirit was grieved for the
misery of Israel.* So if a
man would have peace,
and have sought it long,
and cannot finde it, let him
see whether there bee not
some relique of corrupti-
on which God would
have cast out of thy heart :
and when it's done, and
thou art willing to serve
God perfectly, then thou
shalt finde rest unto thy
soule. And so much for
the second signe of true
grace wrought in a man,

K

to

to wit, if there be any life & strength in him, though it bee mingled with much weaknesse.

3.

The third wee named, that where true grace was, there was heate. *Smoaking flaxe wil be not quench:* where there is smoake, there is fire ; and where fire is, there is heate, be it never so small ; and this added to the former of life : Life is nothing else but a sublimary heate, and where there is life, there is heate, all life is joyned with heate : but not on the contrary, where there is heate, there is life ; for cold things may bee warmed from without by the Sunne ; but where there

is heate from an inward principle, there is life. The Spirit is compared to fire and heate; *Quench not the Spirit: He shall baptize you with the holy Ghost and with fire:* or which is as fire. Therefore where this spirit is in a man, there the Holy Ghost hath bin. Now this heate is nothing else but a sollicitous and earnest desire to please God in all things, to get and increase communion with *Christ*, and to bee built up in grace. I say, it is, first, a sollicitous and earnest desire, a desire accompanied with carefulnesse how hee may doe to please *God* in all things; whereas in other men

there is a luke-warmnesse,
a remisnesse in all things,
they care not whether
they doe it or no : but this
is an earnest carefull de-
sire, and that in the second
place to please God : an
Hypocrite may have
strong desires ; let him bee
brought to have an appre-
hension of Gods wrath,
and hell-fire, and he would
have an earnest desire to
be delivered from it : But
all this is not to please
God, but himselfe, and not
God in all this : But our
desire must bee to please
God: *See how the affections
were stirred ; and what
fruits it wrought, they
were moved by motives
taken from God, and with
desire*

1 Cor. 7. 11.

desire tending to him, and so must we be.

Againe, this righteous desire hath in it this property, that it purifieth the heart from drosse and filth, and it puts it selfe forth in holy actions; makes a man ready to pray, to speake profitably, and the like; as fire makes men active, and fit for action.

3.

Lastly, it is alway guided by the spirit of judgement, when you minde that most, which the Scripture presseth most; where the heart is upright, a man despiseth none of the waies of God, not the meanest truth, but would know them all:

4.

but that which the Scripture most of all urgeth, that hee most earnestly presseth after, and labours to bring his heart unto them, as the Scripture is most love, and the like, so hee taketh most paines with his heart about this: now therefore try by these properties, whether you have heate in you, or no.

Objection.

Oh! but I cannot finde this heate in me, I cannot finde these holy affections in my heart.

Answer.

I answer, consider if thou findest any affections that are holy in thee, though not many; yea, if though findest none, consider if thou hast not this smoake; for sometimes a
man

man may finde the fire it selfe, sometimes onely this smoake, what is it? I answer, when you finde not the affections so moving as you see some others doe, yet you finde in your selfe a carefulnesse, and watchfulnesse over your wayes, that thou wiltst not runne into sin, though thou 'canst not doe what good thou wouldst: why, heere is the smoake, and some fire, though but small, *David* was not able to doe as hee was wont to doe, to pray as hee was wont: and therefore hee prayes God to restore him his spirit, and the joyes he was wont to have; but yet hee was carefull over his

Psal. 5. 1. 12

wayes afterwards : And if thou findest but this smok, this care over thy wayes, this resolution to commit no knowne sinne, though thou findest not the flame of this holy affection, yet be not discouraged, thou hast that which is of the same nature within thee : Smoake is of the same nature with flame, for flame is nothing but smoake set on fire; and therefore take comfort, & continue constant still, till *God* inflames thee, and that is the 3^d signe.

4.

Where there is true grace wrought, there is combate and strife in the working : and afterwards *till hee bring forth judgement into victory.* Before victory

victory there goes a combat : this then is implied, there must be a strife. *The Disciples strove amongst themselves who should bee the greatest in the kingdome of Heaven.* This is a property of all his servants : as *Christ's* kingdome is not of this world; so are they not apt to contend for any thing in this world. But you may know if you bee Christs servants or no, if you contend for spirituall things. *Strive to enter in at the streight gate, for many shall seeke to enter in thereat, but shall not be able.* We see there are two dispositions of men, that some seeke, & are willing to goe to heaven, but take no
K 5. paines

Math. 18. 1.

Luke 13. 24.

Matt. 25.

paines for it ; these seeke
 faith *Christ* to enter , but
 shall not be able to get in :
 but others strive and con-
 tend with all their power ;
 & such must be our strife,
 if we will get into heaven.
 The difference betweene
 the wise Virgins and the
 foolish lay in this, that the
 wise were more diligent
 than the other. Formall
 professors may contend,
 but it is but for a fit ; they
 are soone weary of this
 contention; they leave off
 rowing, & suffer the boate
 to go downe the streame :
 but wee must strive untill
 we get the victory, and run
 with *St. Paul* untill we get
 the prize. And what made
 him to doe so ? why, hee
 confide-

2 Cor. 9. 24.

25.

considered 2. things, first, he look't on the Crowne, an incorruptible Crowne. Secondly, he was loath to run in vaine, and lose all his labour: so the reason why we doe not contend, is because we doe not consider these 2. things, namely, the *prize & crowne* of reward, and that else wee shall but lose our labour; and therefore we must strive: If we be remisse, it is an argumēt that wee have a name to live, but are dead.

And therefore consider it, there must be a strife & a combate; and there will be that, by reason of that original corruption that is in us: We have continuall worke with our owne hearts.

Rom. 7. 21.

hearts ; the flesh is ready to have the first hand in every businesse, if wee doe not resist it ; wee shall exceedingly goe downe the wind, if we doe not strive, and that hard : For when there is an infused habit as grace is , and a corrupt nature contrary to it , nature is ready to take part with it, which was bred & borne with it. *Whē I would doe good, evil is still present with mee :* there is something lay at the fountaine-head, as it were, and stopt him when hee would doe any good. It is our case also, in wel-doing wee see how backward wee are to begin, and when wee have begun, how ready wee are

to

to leave off. But if it be a
businesse that concernes
our selves, we are ready to
doe, yea, to over-doe it :
How ready we are to idle
words, how backward we
are to profitable confe-
rence; how ready to spend
on our lusts, how back-
ward to true liberality; and
so I might instance in di-
vers others. And therefore
seeing wee have this flesh
about us, wee had need to
strive ; it is that which a
Christian should make ac-
count of, to do that which
he hath not a minde to do,
and not to doe that which
hee hath a minde to doe,
and so still to doe the con-
trary, and strive against
the lusts of the flesh, and so
to

to restrain his nature from what he would doe.

1 Object.

But how should we doe to contend thus ?

Answer.

1 Tim. 6. 12.

To give you some directions, *Fight the good fight of faith*: The acting of our faith, and setting it on worke when any thing comes to hinder us, will helpe us to overcome in this combate. Let a man beleve the promises and threatnings of God, and he shall bee able to resist the flesh : but let faith bee asleepe, and it will quickly prevaile against us : *Take the shield of faith*: Now, what a shield is for the defence of the body, that faith is for the defence of the soule. Whē any temptations

Ephes. 6. 16.

tations are suggested unto us, faith is it that repels them ; never is a man overcome but through defect of faith, or when the habit lies hid asleepe in us. *Hebr. 11.* When they set their faith on worke, what marvellous things did they? what made *Ieroboam* so weake, but onely want of faith? What was it that overcame *Eve*? but onely that she did not beleieve stedfastly the word of *God*. On the contrary, what was it that strengthened *Daniel*, the *three children*, and infinite others? it was their faith. The Saints when they have the use of their faith, are very strong: but when they have not the use

use of their faith are very weake as other men ; as *Abraham* , how weake was hee , when he exposed his wives chastity for want of faith ? and *David* when he dissembled , and *Peter* when he denyed his Master ; but when hee was strengthened through faith , how bold was hee before the Councell ? It was his faith that enabled him to fight the good fight , because he kept the faith in the profession of it , and in the practice of it , and in teaching of it : and therefore if we would be strengthened to resist our spirituall enemies , we must labour to set our faith on worke , that is the
first

first meanes.

The second meanes, St. Peter sets downe: *Dearely beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstaine from fleshly lusts which war against the soule.*

1 Pet. 2. 11.

First, consider that you are but strangers and Pilgrims: for if you take the pleasures in the world, you cannot sit by them, why? you are but strangers, therefore abstaine from them.

Againe, consider that these lusts they fight against the soule. No man in the world, that did consider that such a man now knocked at the doore, whom if hee did let in, would cut his throate, but that

that hee would use all meanes to barre him out: why this now is our case; they seeke our lives, nay, our soules ; they fight, there is their force ; they seeke to prevaile by maine force if they can ; if they cannot, then they seeke to proceed by fraud and cunning : they are ready to perswade us, that they are friends , and not enemies , and that you may goe to heaven though you yeeld to them , and that you may quickly overcome them; that if you satisfie them for the present, they will bee gone , and trouble you no more, and a thousand such like : but take heede, fight against them,

them, keepe them out, not onely for the present, for they renew the battell; as an enemy if he be too weake at one time in one place, hee increaseth his forces, takes more advantages, and renews his attaile againe: so doe these, they will set upon us againe and againe with a fresh force, and if they cannot prevaile one way, they will try another way, and if they cannot doe good by one, they will use all wayes.

And then consider the end of this fight, it is to kil and destroy, as we know the end of a fight is: Now these lusts they fight against your soule, and nothing

thing will satisfie them but your life. Every time they set upon you, it is a buffetting; every time you yeeld to them, it is a wounding, and if you do not resist & strive against them, they will procure your utter perdition. And therefore I beseech you as strangers & pilgrims, abstaine from fleshly lusts which warre against your soules.

Object. 1.

Yes, I could be content to strive, if there were any hope of doing any good: but I am affraid I shall be overcome, and therefore as good yeeld at the first, as at the last.

Ans.

I answer, there is great hope, yea, assurance of victory, wheresoever true grace

grace is, though it may be held downe long, and suffer many oppositions: yet in the end he shall be sure of victory, *till hee bring forth judgment into victory.*

A fift signe to know if there be saving grace, yea, or no; if there be, it shall at last have the upper hand, but all through *Christ*; He *that hath begun that good worke, will perfit it: For he will doe it, for he is faithfull,* and in him wee are rich: through him we shall be more than conquerers, not through our selves; we are apt to bee discouraged, when wee sit downe and consider what corruptions wee have arising from our natures, which wee thinke

we

Phil. 1.6

1 Thes. 5.24

2 Cor. 8. 9

wee shall never master. True, we cannot doe it in our owne strength, but *Christ* hath undertaken to doe it for us, he shall subdue our iniquities.

There are 2 things in the kingdome of *grace*, which when we looke on, are apt to make us discouraged.

I First, when a man looks on his owne strength, and sees how little hee can doe of himselfe.

2 Secondly, when hee lookes on the Kingdome of *grace* abroad, and sees how it goes downe the wind, and how the wicked prevaile, & the godly are weake, and goe to the wall: But *Christ* hee will afford us his strength against

Infirmities.

gainst our lusts to subdue them, and for the enemies of the Gospell, he will trample them all under his

it is his promise, *Hee will bring forth judgement into victory.* Now Christ doth this two waies: first, by watering the buds, the seeds of grace, and maketh them to spring up as Willows by the water courses: *his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the Olive-tree, and his smel as Lebanon: they shall revive as the Corne, and grow as the Olive, &c.*

Esay 44. 4.

Hosca. 14. 7.

Secondly, by removing all these impediments, which hinder the growth of grace any way. And therefore now let us not

be discouraged, but make
use of these proa^{les} of
Sanctification, which we
are so apt to forget: And
though we be as weak
bruised Reede, or as the
smoaking Flaxe, yet let
us not faint, nor give over;
but bee encouraged to
strive, and contend with-
out reasoning, seeing wee
are sure the day shall bee
ours; for so is his promise,
*A bruised reed shall bee not
breake, and smoaking flaxe
shall he not quench, till hee
bring forth iudgment into
victory.*

FINIS.

Aggravation
OF
[S I N N E:
AND
S I N N I N G
Against { KNOWLEDGE.
MERCIE.

Delivered in severall Sermons
upon divers occasions.

BY
THO: GOODVVIN. B. D.

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